

L O U I S A.

A N O V E L,

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

B Y T H E A U T H O R O F

M E L I S S A A N D M A R C I A ;

O R

T H E S I S T E R S.

V O L U M E I I.

D U B L I N :

P R I N T E D F O R P. W O G A N , P. B Y R N E , J. M O O R E , J. J O N E S ,
G R U E B E R A N D M ' A L L I S T E R , A N D W. J O N E S .

1790.



LOUISA.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOUISA was met at Dorchester by Mrs. Raby, with the most cordial affection: and scarcely could the latter refrain from rejoicing at an event, that procured her the society of her charming friend.

The *hotel* was the place where she had fixed her abode, which she found more convenient than a private lodging; for being accustomed to reside altogether with her brother, she had few servants of her own.

The chamber she had secured for Louisa, fronted the sea; the sound of the beating waves according with the pensive cast of Louisa's mind, she foresaw that she should be disposed to pass many hours in a place where she could, without restraint, indulge her sad reflections.

Mrs. Raby was extremely desirous of hearing a full detail of the events that had befallen her, which Louisa had explained but imperfectly in her letter; and however averse she was to criminate her mother, it was impossible she could avoid it, in the present instance, without a total violation of truth; but it was with deep regret, that she related this black transaction even to her most intimate friend.

“ You see, my dear Emily,” added she, “ that it is impossible for me to think of residing henceforth with my mother : I must therefore request Doctor Sandolph, when he returns from Wales, to find out some proper asylum for me.”

“ Would to God ! I could offer you one, that you would approve,” cried Mrs Raby ; “ but my brother is of late much altered ; our house is become a scene of noise and tumult, shunned by all people of taste and elegance ; and I often find myself amidst company which I am ashamed of. I should be far happier in a house of my own ; yet my brother loves me and my children, and would, I am sure, be extremely averse to our separation ; therefore I own I do not feel sufficient resolution to quit him ; our presence tends to cherish some soft and gentle sentiments in him, which, but for this, his rough companions would completely destroy.”

“ I would not, upon any account, have you quit Mr. Melcomb,” returned Louisa, “ who is a very unexceptionable protector, notwithstanding some trifling failings, which chiefly hurt himself ; and perhaps we are both full young to be left entirely to our own discretion. Perfectly satisfied as I am, my dear Emily, with your friendship, I ask no proof of it, but your protection for the present.”

Mrs. Raby tenderly embraced her, and assured her nothing could delight her more than her company. The friends then settled their plan of life, and agreed not to appear in public, that Louisa might not be exposed to any fresh persecutions. They bathed at a very early hour in the morning, drove out after breakfast to some distance from the



the town, repeated their airings in the evening, and read and worked the rest of their time.

Louisa had passed a few tranquil days at Weymouth. One night after she had parted with Mrs. Raby, and was retired in her chamber, finding herself little disposed to sleep she stood leaning with her elbows on the window, her eyes fixed on the sea. There was no moon, but the sky was beautifully clear and brilliant with stars, and a gleam of light seemed to play on the rippling water. This agreeable sight, at first engaged Louisa's attention; but shortly she fell into her usual train of thought, in which she had continued so long, that every thing was become quiet around her, when she was suddenly roused by her door being flung open with great noise, and two persons bounced in, who were as hastily retreating with an apology for their mistake, when an involuntary scream which escaped from Louisa, instantly brought them back again.

"My God! what luck!" exclaimed a voice, which she but too well knew to be Lord Pompoufton's. "Go," cried he to his valet de chambre, who had preceded him with lights. Louisa herself flew towards the door to escape, but the man was gone, the door locked, and the key deposited in Lord Pompoufton's pocket, with a celerity that baffled her attempts.

"Now," cried he, his eyes flashing fire, "now, Madam, you and I shall settle our accounts together. You must make me amends for the indignities I suffered by your means, when you left me senseless on the ground; exposed to the derision of a pack of fellows, who delighted in seeing a man of my quality insulted. But it shall be my turn now to triumph."

Louisa,

Louisa, exceedingly terrified, yet sufficiently mistress of herself to forbear calling for assistance, (because she dreaded beyond measure an *éclat* in a public *hotel*) approached him with folded hands.

"Be not ungenerous, Lord Pompoufton; depart instantly, without obliging me to take unpleasant measures for your dismissal."

"O! I shall not stir, 'till I have taken my revenge on you, who shewed no feeling for me; therefore 'tis fit I should be as callous towards you."

"Indeed, Lord Pompoufton, you must go, and that directly. As to the sufferings you lay to my charge, you know I had no hand in them; they were the consequence of your own violence, and I cannot think you are capable of bearing malice towards a woman. But go, I beseech you; do not force me to alarm the house by my cries."

"Before that can be done," cried he, "I'll profit at least by the present moment," attempting to catch her in his arms, but she eluded his grasp.

"If you will but leave me now," cried Louisa, "I give you my word and honour I will see you to-morrow morning at any hour you please; but if you come one step nearer, I will call to the servants in the next room."

Lord Pompoufton hesitated; but, considering how impossible it would be for him to continue in her chamber against her will, in a house full of people, consented to enter into a compromise.

First he stipulated, that she should grant him a full pardon for all past offences; and next, that she should promise, without any mental reservation or equivocation, to meet him in the morning
upon

upon the sands at seven o'clock. He insisted upon her coming alone ; but that she protested against.

" Why," said he laughing, " I cannot run away with you amidst the bathers."

At last he consented her maid should accompany her ; and as a proof of her sincerity towards him, he was very urgent to seal the agreement with a kiss ; but Louisa being inexorable, he was obliged to content himself with just touching her hand, which she reluctantly held out, and then he departed, amazed at the ascendancy which beauty and virtue united, obtained over his turbulent passions.

The moment he was gone, Louisa hastened to fasten the door, which Mrs. Raby had persuaded her not to lock for fear of fire. Louisa congratulated herself on having, by her own prudence, got rid of Lord Pompoufton, without making a disturbance in the house at that time of night, which, besides overwhelming her with confusion, must have occasioned a great many idle stories, very prejudicial to her reputation.

She learned from Lord Pompoufton, that he had arrived late that night at Weymouth, where he came to dissipate his *ennui*, without the least idea of finding there the object he had ineffectually sought in London ; that he had soon after his arrival, gone out to supper ; and on his return, his servant, who was half asleep, and perhaps not quite sober, had ushered him by mistake into Louisa's chamber, which was above that prepared for his Lord.

Poor Louisa passed a restless night ; she could not help starting every moment, and fancying as she dozed, that Lord Pompoufton was returned.

Before six o'clock she arose, and went to Mrs.
Raby,

Raby, to whom she related Lord Pompoufton's difagreeable intrusion, and all that had paffed between them.

"But furely," cried Mrs. Raby, "you don't mean to meet him?"

"Indeed but I do."

"Well, I fhould not think myfelf bound," faid Mrs. Raby, "to keep a promife thus extorted from me."

"I differ with you," replied Louifa; "Lord Pompoufton went away perfectly relying on it; therefore I keep it, becaufe my honour is engaged in the performance, and not to gratify him; for you may imagine this interview muft be very difagreeable to me."

At the appointed time, Louifa, after defiring Mrs. Raby would keep an eye upon her from the window, and join her after ſhe had made a turn, went out. At a diftance, ſhe diſcerned the figure of a man upon the ſands, but it ſeemed unlike Lord Pompoufton. It was a very different perſon; and ſhe ſoon diſtinguiſhed Lord Dane-field's air. He too ſeemed to know her, by the haſty ſteps he made to reach her. He ſeemed exceedingly agitated, yet ſo evidently overjoyed to ſee her, as made her almoſt repent of her jealouſy, 'till recollecting how ſtrong the proof appeared of his infidelity, corroborated by his ſilence, ſhe armed herſelf with coldneſs to receive him, not a little dreading his meeting with Lord Pompoufton.

"Is it thus, Miſs Roſeville," cried Lord Dane-field, mortified to the quick? "that I am received, I was miſtaken then, when I believed your ſilence involuntary; and came, perſuaded that you would explain

explain it to my satisfaction. I have much to say to you."

"I can hear nothing at present, my lord:" cried Louisa, in great trepidation, "nor perhaps ever."

"Good God! why this cruel *ever*?—what can have prejudiced you against me?"

At this moment Lord Pompoufton overtook them. "I am extremely obliged to you," cried he in a loud voice, "for being so punctual to your appointment, and am ashamed, Miss Roseville, that I have made you wait; but Lord Danefield's presence was not included in our agreement."

"The cause, madam," whispered Lord Danefield, "of your cool reception, is now explained; far be it from me, to interrupt an assignation of your appointing."

And, without looking at Lord Pompoufton, he bowed to her, and hurried off.

All Louisa's wonted presence of mind now forsook her; she actually ran some paces, crying, "stay, Lord Danefield; stay, I conjure you."

"My presence, Madam," said he without slackening his pace, "is quite unnecessary." And in a moment, he was out of sight.

"Horribly unlucky to be sure you are!" cried Lord Pompoufton with a malicious sneer; "but since he is so inflexible, you may as well remember, that your appointment was with *me*, and not with Danefield."

Louisa made no answer; her heart swelled with contending passions, and she almost wished she was buried in the sand.

"Since you will not honour me with a word," said Lord Pompoufton, "I have so little cause to

be satisfied, that I most heartily repent having behaved so generously to you last night."

"Generously!" echoed Louisa.

"Yes, generously; few young men but would have made a better use of their good fortune. However, I wish to know your final determination in regard to me. If favourable, I shall adore you;—if otherwise, I believe I must go and cut Sir Charles Roseville's throat."

"Savage wretch! what has that good man done to excite your malevolence?"

"Taken from me my soul's treasure; the greatest injury he could do me; and occasioned me besides, personal insult."

"You desire me to be explicit," said Louisa; "understand then, nothing in this world shall induce me to be yours; therefore cease a hopeless pursuit. But if you will drop all thoughts of vengeance against my friend, and relation, I will endeavour to think of you, as a man not impenetrable to noble sentiments, and I shall cease to hate you."

"Cease to hate me! and that's all! But will you promise to love me?"

"No; that is utterly impossible."

"Well, I'll spare Sir Charles, because he has the honour to bear your name; but I am not often disposed to put up with affronts."

Mrs. Raby's arrival now put an end to this discourse, and Lord Pomfoultton tried to win her over to his interest, but with so little success that she hurried back her friend to the *hotel*; both she and Louisa parting from his lordship with the most distant civility.

Scarcely had they reached their apartment, before Louisa throwing her arms round Mrs. Raby's neck,

neck, burst into tears. I am undone for ever!" cried she; "the only man in the world whose esteem I valued, thinks ill of me!"

"Lord Danefield do you mean? I thought I saw him."

"You did indeed! He came purposely to see me; to tell me perhaps, he was free from his engagement with Lady Almeria; and the first thing he hears, is, that abominable Lord Pompouston thanking me for my punctuality in meeting him! upon which away he hurried."

Mrs. Raby endeavoured to console her; representing that Lord Danefield would soon be undeceived: and that it was impossible he could retain an injurious opinion of her. She added, "you seem to have forgotten your own jealousy; yet no longer ago than yesterday, I thought you had determined never again to speak to this faithless man."

"'Tis true; the circumstance of the letter alarmed me, nor can I yet tell what to think; but so contradictory are my sentiments, that however offended I am with him, I could not see him without unspeakable pleasure, and I cannot bear he should think me a jilt. He seemed too, unfeignedly happy to see me when we met on the sands; but what is very odd, he hinted his surprise at my silence, as if he had deserved to hear from me. I would fain however persuade myself he has not been unfaithful; but how account for the affair of the portrait?"

This was impossible to Mrs. Raby, who determined to send, unknown to Louisa, to find out Lord Danefield, and desire him to call upon her; when she hoped very soon to clear up matters between them.

But

But the servant returned with the intelligence that he had only been one night in the town, had been gone above an hour, and that when he went away, he seemed uncertain what road he should take.

Mrs. Raby consoled herself for the failure of her friendly scheme, by thinking that Lord Dane-field's speedy departure, would at least prevent any *fracas* happening between him and Lord Pompoufton. This too mitigated Louisa's vexation; and she resolved to confine herself a close prisoner, as long as Lord Pompoufton remained at Weymouth, and to occupy the same apartment as Mrs. Raby.

The latter was of opinion, that the best thing she could do, would be to leave Weymouth in the night, and to take such measures, as would render it impossible for Lord Pompoufton to trace her. But Louisa thought herself safer in the *hotel*, and disliked the idea of running with her friend mysteriously about the country, like distressed damsels in a romance. Her clothes too, were not yet come, and this subjected her to great inconvenience.

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD Pompouſton having in vain, for two days, tried to force Louiſa out of her intrenchment, after perſecuting Mrs. Raby with letters and meſſages, to beg her interceſſion with Miſs Roſeville, at laſt gave up the point, and ſuddenly left Weymouth.

The poſt now brought her the following letter : what her ſenſations were, on peruſing it, cannot eaſily be deſcribed.

TO MISS ROSEVILLE.

“ MADAM,

“ Suddenly to diſcover imperfections in any object that one has ſuppoſed faultleſs, muſt, by proving the judgment erroneous, give ſenſible mortification ; but if that object has long engroſſed every tender ſentiment, of which the heart of man is ſuſceptible, how affecting muſt the diſcovery be ! Diſappointed in my viſionary hopes of happineſs, I own myſelf ſtill ſolicitous, that yours ſhould be eſtabliſhed on a more ſolid baſis, which perhaps, may ſomewhat excuſe my preſumption in obſerving to you, that the inconfiſtence of your conduct, cannot fail of being prejudicial to yourſelf.

“ I ſhall paſs over in ſilence your neglect of my letters, becauſe, till I met you at Weymouth, ſome circumſtances induced me to ſuſpect unfair means had been taken by Lady Roſeville to ſuppreſs them, ſo that poſſibly they never reached you.

“ But

" But to put myself out of the question, suffer me to advert, to what relates more materially to you.

" After your forced elopement with Lord Pom-poufton (which I never heard of till this day, and which my fiftter affures me, gave you infinite uneafinefs) one fhould naturally fuppose he would be the laft man in the world, you would deign to honour with an appointment. This fingular circumftance, fo oppofite to the idea I entertained of your delicacy, I was fo unfortunate to witnefs. How much it fhocked—but pardon my recurring again to felf; I am too fenfible that cannot intereft you—I meant—but my ideas are fo difordered, I fcarcely know what I mean; however, I think I meant to obferve, that as after what paffed in Shropfhire, you may not confider yourfelf as perfectly free; I beg it may be underftood, that I fhould be very forry to obftruct your wifhes, which I muft conclude, are in favour of Lord Pom-poufton. May your union with him render you happy! and then I will endeavour not to repine, that when all obftacles were removed, when Lord Melvern had facrificed his own wifhes to promote mine, all my fond hopes were in one inftant blafted!

" Your reception did indeed, fomewhat prepare me for this cruel difappointment; but why you wifhed to detain me, to witnefs your preference of another, of a man, whom you once profefled to diflike, is wholly inexplicable.

" I have the honour to be, Madam,

" Your moft unhappy,

" Though ftill devoted,

" And obedient fervant,

Duke-Street, (Monday) " DANEFIELD."

Mrs.

Mrs. Raby, who found Louisa bathed in tears, took the letter which she held out to her, and having read it, "Well," cried she, "all this may easily be set to rights; I shall answer this letter, with your permission; and I am very certain Lord Danefield is as innocent of infidelity, as you are. Lady Roseville, full of her odious project, probably intercepted your letters—come, come; dry your tears—Lord Danefield will very shortly be at your feet, imploring your pardon."

While Mrs. Raby was thus consoling her friend, they were somewhat alarmed by hearing an express was arrived from Mr. Bangrove, who desired to be immediately admitted to speak with Miss Roseville.

As Louisa imagined he had nothing to say to her, except concerning the detention of her clothes, she was vexed to have made Bangrove, who she knew to be very officious, fancy himself a man of importance to her, "to send an express about a mere nothing, as if a letter by the post would not have done as well!" thus thought she.

But Mrs. Raby, who was present, was astonished at her change of countenance, while she was reading the letter, "You are sure, Sir," said she, "turning to the bearer, "that all this is true?"

"I suppose so;—why should you doubt it, Madam?"

"I will give you an answer in a few moments;" said she, and she withdrew with Mrs. Raby.

"After all the snares that have been laid for me, 'tis no wonder," said she, "that I am suspicious of every thing. Read this letter, my dear Emily, and advise me how to act."

To

TO MISS ROSEVILLE.

" MADAM, *Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 25.*

" The very moment this reaches you, I would advise you (albeit you are shy of receiving advice from me) to put yourself immediately into a chaise, or coach, or whatever vehicle you please, and forthwith come to London. No time is to be lost, if you wish to find Lady Roseville alive. As soon as you arrive, I crave the favour of you to send to me; and at any hour, day or night, I will come to you.

" Her Ladyship, in her good intervals, is distracted to see you; how she came into her present condition, or where she is, 'tis needless to mention at present.

" The bearer has my orders to vouch for the truth of this letter, at least that he saw me sign, seal, and deliver it; further, I did not choose to entrust him with.—In expectation of seeing you immediately, I remain,

" MADAM,

" Your most obedient humble servant,

" JOHN BANGROVE."

" Does this appear to be his hand writing?" asked Mrs. Raby.

" It does; but did you ever read any thing so alarming and incoherent? I dread, lest Lord Pompoufton should be at the bottom of this."

" Let me go and sift the man."

Accordingly she did; but he either was, or pretended to be, ignorant of every thing that concerned Lady Roseville.

Louisa

Louisa terrified, yet full of doubt and perplexity, knew not what to resolve; when Mr. Melcomb unexpectedly arrived, to see his sister, who, upon hearing what had happened, offered instantly to attend Louisa to London. Such an escort, relieved her from all her apprehensions in regard to Lord Pompoufton; and Mrs. Raby saying she would be of the party, determined her to set out immediately, and she dispatched the express, with this answer to Bangrove.

Mrs. Raby, unwilling to hurry her children, left them to follow leisurely with their servant; and, in a very short time, she, and Louisa, were ready for their journey.

They went on without stopping, only to change horses, to London; poor Louisa, all the while, figuring to herself a variety of disasters, without being able to conjecture which of them had befallen her mother; and in her present anxiety, she ceased to remember every cause of displeasure she had given her.

It was about nine at night when they got to Hill-Street, where Mr. Melcomb proposed Louisa should stay, while he went in search of Bangrove, with whom he secretly wished to confer, on the mysterious appearance of things, before he saw her. In the mean while she and her friend took a little refreshment; and two hours passed, which seemed two ages to Louisa, before he returned, when he came accompanied by Bangrove.

Louisa saw by the countenance of the latter, that there was real cause of alarm, and in a faint voice, enquired after her mother.

"She is alive, and that's all;" said he; "will you come and see her?"

Louisa

Louisa instantly arose, and Mrs. Raby was preparing to follow her, but Bangrove interposed.

"Your presence, Madam, might distress Lady Roseville—Mr. Melcomb may be of use; therefore I shall crave the favour of his attendance on Miss Roseville."

Mrs. Raby, with reluctance, consented to stay behind; and as she had been ill all day, Louisa was the more willing to go without her. A hackney coach was in waiting, into which she threw herself, exceedingly oppressed with grief and dismay.

"Have you told the man to go to Portman-square?" said she, to Bangrove.

"No, Madam, I thought I had hinted to you, that Lady Roseville was not there; but I have directed him whither to go."

Louisa, unable to account for this change of habitation, gazed wildly at him, "Not in Portman-square!" cried she, "and yet so dangerously ill! where then is my mother?"

"Why, Madam," said Bangrove, hesitatingly, "why—she is at a friend's house."

"Lord bless me!" cried Louisa, where can the man be carrying us; surely, she must be in a strange part of the town?"

"Don't be alarmed; he is going very right."

Louisa said nothing, but looked at Melcomb, whose presence somewhat re-assured her. Presently after, she asked how long her mother had been ill, what her illness was, and who attended her.

To all which she received strange unintelligible answers; and all she could gather was, that her illness had been sudden, and that she did not want for advice.

Just

Just before the carriage stopped, Bangrove said, "you must not be surprized, Miss Roseville, if you find your mother but indifferently lodged ; but it is the best apartments the man could give her."

"The man could give her !" repeated Louisa ; "what man do you mean ?"

Why, Madam, truth will out ; the sheriff's officer, is the man I speak of."

"Gracious God !" exclaimed Louisa, "is my mother then in a spunging house ?"

"'Tis too true."

"And how could you be so cruel to suffer her——"

"How could I tell you would bail her ? you have already encumbered yourself, by taking her debts upon you ; besides too, you are under age."

"It shall be my affair," cried Melcomb, "to bail Lady Roseville ; so, my dear Madam, have no uneasiness upon that head—I wished Mr. Bangrove not to have shocked you with this intelligence."

"O, my poor mother !" sobbed Louisa, "my poor mother !"

"There's nothing so very terrible in this, as you imagine ;" said Bangrove, "a worse discovery is yet to be made."

"Oh God ! support me !" cried Louisa, "what further horrors have you to disclose ?"

The coach stopping, prevented Bangrove's answer ; but as he handed her into the house, the appearance of which alone, was sufficient to shock her, he whispered, "call all your fortitude to your aid ; you must expect to find your mother much altered."

A woman now appeared, and offering to light Louisa up stairs, Bangrove desired she would wait
a mo-

a moment, that he might prepare Lady Roseville to see her.

During his absence, Melcomb, in the kindest manner, attempted to sooth and support her spirits; she felt his attentions, and wondered at them; but Melcomb was by nature gentle, though he had lately thought it manly, to appear the contrary.

Bangrove's appearance at the door, was a summons for Louisa to follow; the woman preceded them with a candle, up a little dirty staircase; and Louisa's heart palpitated so violently, and her knees knocked together, as she ascended, so much, that she was ready to sink.

But all that she had imagined of most horrible, fell short of the scene, which the opening door presented—Lady Roseville, or a figure that was shewn to her as such (for she could not believe it to be her mother at first) was seated in a dirty green stuff bed, supported by pillows; by her maid Lacely on one side, and a great fat red-faced nurse on the other:—her complexion of a dead white, sprinkled with a sort of dew, and tinged with purple spots; her face swelled, and all her features distended; a white froth bubbling out of her parched and livid mouth; and her large eyes, red and glassy, were rolling from side to side, without apparently distinguishing any thing; she seemed to breathe with great difficulty, and inarticulately she cried out for air.

Such was now the figure, of the once gay, and beautiful Lady Roseville!

The windows were open, and a rushing wind blew about the curtains, and threatened extinction to one miserable tallow candle, guttering in a corner.

“ Ap-

"Approach," cried she, endeavouring to raise her voice, "and save your mother from destruction."

This exertion was too much for her; she uttered a deep groan, and sunk, half fainting, on her pillow. Louisa had thrown herself on her knees by the side of the bed, and had seized her clammy hand; but overcome by this spectacle, she became nearly as senseless as her mother. Drops were given to both, and both revived. Louisa first recovered the power of speech,—“would to God, my dear mother,” said she, “it was in my power to relieve you; but to the Almighty alone you must look for help!”

“What, then you think me dying? Oh! cursed be the hour when I took that fatal draught!”

Bangrove shrugged his shoulders.

“What draught? has there been some mistake in my mother’s medicines?” asked Louisa, with increased terror.

“O no, no mistake; it was all my own doing, and I shall never get the better of it. My entrails are at this moment on fire.”

“Surely she is light headed,” whispered Louisa, starting up, and looking wildly herself, “send instantly; run! fly! get the best advice. Why was she let to remain in this horrid place?”

“She could not be removed without the greatest danger,” said Bangrove, in a low voice, “had she not been detained by the writ; and an eminent physician left her, just before you came.

“Tell me quickly, what does he think of her?”

“That her recovery is scarcely to be expected; and that he cannot pronounce whether she can bear the fatigue of a removal, till to-morrow; he will be here by eight in the morning. In the mean

mean while, he has ordered her a composing draught; but she protested, she would not take it till, she had seen you."

Louisa instantly had it poured out, and tenderly taking her mother's hand, pressed her to take it.

"I will?" said she, "if you will promise not to leave me; your presence will protect me against horrors."

"Tranquillize your mind, my dear mother; be assured," said Louisa, "I will not leave you."

Lady Roseville now being settled for the night, and Louisa placed in a greasy arm chair by her bed side, Bangrove took his leave, charged with a message from her to Melcomb, to thank him for his trouble, and earnestly to entreat that he would go home, and relieve his sister from her anxiety. But Melcomb could not endure the idea of deserting his sweet young friend, in such a place, and such a situation—Lady Roseville might expire in the night; and then, thought he, "what would become of her daughter, amid strangers!" instead therefore of going home, he discharged the coach, and wrote a few lines to Mrs. Raby, to explain what had happened; ensuring himself a hearty welcome at the officer's house, by ordering a handsome supper, which he scarcely touched; though Bangrove, whom he asked to partake of it, did not find his appetite in the least affected by any melancholy impression, which it might be supposed, his mind had received: when he retired, he promised to meet the physician the next morning.

And Melcomb throwing himself into a chair, prepared to pass the night in the parlour of the spunging house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IT may easily be imagined, what a dreadful night poor Louisa passed ; fatigued in mind and body ; afraid of indulging any propensity to sleep, lest her mother should suffer by her want of vigilance ; roused every ten minutes, by Lady Roseville's hollow groans ; sometimes terrified by the wild manner in which she tore open the curtain, exclaiming, " She is gone ; I know she is gone ! " Then, she would with violence grasp her hand, and in a supplicating tone, entreat her to save and forgive her.

Once, she gave a horrid shriek, and cried out, " Sir Edward is come ; see how frightfully he threatens me ! O God ! it is all over ! I am undone for ever ! "

Then turning to Louisa, she said, " Don't leave me a single moment ! your innocence is a shield, that perhaps, may even cover me. " And in a more collected manner, she added, " Don't cry ; you have nothing to lament. Oh ! that I could reflect on one good action, to cheer my mind ! but—oh ! "

And after a deep groan, she became more composed ; and towards morning, dozed a little.

Bangrove, and the physician, (a humane and sensible man) were punctual to their appointment ; the latter found Lady Roseville a little better, and thought, if a lodging could be procured very near, she might, with precaution, be transported thither.

Bangrove therefore, by Louisa's desire, went immediately to find some clean quiet place fit to receive her. In the mean while, Mr. Melcomb gave his bail to the sheriff's officer, and was not a
little

little amazed to hear Lady Roseville had been arrested at the suit of Sir Ralph Random ! This he communicated to Louisa, who was exceedingly surprised, when she found him in the parlour, and learned, that he had passed the night there. Such kind attention could not fail of pleasing and obliging her ; however, she pressed him to go home, to which he consented, promising to send his sister to her, if she was tolerably well.

Bangrove soon returned, having found a lodging, such as was wished, at a little distance from the sheriff's officer's house ; Louisa herself stepped to see it, and to order the necessary preparations to be made for her mother's reception ; and about an hour afterwards, Lady Roseville was, with infinite difficulty, got down stairs, and carried on a mattress to a coach, screaming all the time, and adding, by her own impatience, to her sufferings. No sooner had they placed her in the carriage, than she fell into convulsions, from which, by the Doctor's assistance, she recovered ; and then, attended by Mrs. Lacely and the nurse, proceeded in the coach, which went at a snail's pace to her new habitation, where they had less trouble in getting her settled, as her apartment was on the ground floor.

The Doctor waited till she was in bed ; strongly recommending, that she might be kept very quiet ; and indeed, she was so exhausted with her late fatigue, that she lay motionless, and only by her hard breathing, gave signs of life. As he was departing, Louisa followed him into a parlour, and desired to know his real opinion of her mother's case.

" Why, Madam," said he, " I am sorry I can give you but very little hopes indeed ; for
though

though we have contrived to blunt some of the corrosive particles of the poison, we could not sheath them so entirely, as totally to destroy their malignity. Lady Roseville's constitution being naturally strong, she may hold out a week, or possibly ten days; but I scarcely think she will last so long, especially as the turbulent state in which I have observed her mind to be (excuse, Madam, my freedom of speech) frequently counteracts the composing medicines I give her."

Louisa, inexpressibly shocked to find that the hints her mother had thrown out, of having poisoned herself, were founded in truth, could make no reply: and the Doctor retired, assuring her, that no care on his part should be wanting, at least to mitigate Lady Roseville's sufferings.

Louisa then wished to hear from Bangrove, what he knew of this horrid story; but he pressed her earnestly to defer hearing it till the evening, and to take the opportunity of Lady Roseville's present composed state, to seek repose herself, which her looks too plainly indicated, how much she needed. Indeed, when it is considered that she had travelled day and night from Weymouth, and ever since had suffered all that terror, grief, and anxiety, could inflict; it must appear, that nothing but the fortitude of her own mind, could have supported her so long. She consented therefore to lie down, and after a short sleep, was again in readiness to attend her mother, who, continuing in a torpid state, Louisa was at liberty to receive her friend Mrs. Raby, whose gentle soothing, calmed her spirits.

Bangrove returned early in the evening; and having adjusted his ruffles, and stroaked his chin,

C

began,

began, with a very consequential air, the desired relation.

"I fear, ladies," said he, "that my account will be but very imperfect; for I have never been able to get from Lady Roseville, more than broken hints, as she has been generally in too much pain, to give a circumstantial detail of what has lately passed.

But former transactions, which you cannot be acquainted with, no person is enabled to relate so well as myself; for many years I have done business for all your family, received their rents, and I may say, possessed their entire confidence.

I shall take things back as long ago as when your father, who was but eighteen, first saw your mother at an assembly at Cambridge; whither he had gone to see his cousin Temple, (the present Sir Charles Roseville) with whom he was extremely intimate. The moment he saw her, he fell passionately in love with her; to which I have heard Sir Charles say, she contributed, by every allure-ment in her power, I need not tell you her success; she persuaded your father to disregard the prudent advice of his cousin, who saw through her arts; and a journey to Scotland was the consequence.

You have doubtless heard, how extremely offended his parents were with this match, which the disparity of years between the new married couple, gave them just cause to suspect their son had been drawn into; and this suspicion being corroborated, by the unfavourable account they heard of your mother's former conduct, added to her want of birth and fortune, made them for some time, refuse him their forgiveness: but 'tis difficult to continue inexorable to an only son, especially

especially if that son be heir to a title, and large possessions——."

"These," interrupted Louisa, "have nothing to do with parental affection."

"No, madam, not positively; but you will allow, pride has a vote on these occasions; and it was given in favour of a reconciliation: but upon a condition, deemed very harsh by Mr. Temple; for his father insisted upon his executing his former project of travelling, at least a twelvemonth; promising, during his absence, to countenance his wife, and to give her an allowance, suitable to her situation as such. Lady Temple would fain have had her daughter-in-law reside with her; but this she declined, preferring to live at a small house, near York, with her friend, Miss Watkyns, now Mrs. Dinley.

Soon after Mr. Temple went abroad, Mrs. Temple announced her pregnancy to the family. This news gave them great joy. Lady Temple resolved she would be with your mother during her lying-in; but two months before that event was expected, you came into the world. Your grandmother, who was always, as you know, very sickly, happened at that time not to be well enough to undertake a long journey, so that she did not visit your mother, till she had been brought to bed two months.

Mr. Temple, no sooner heard of your birth, than he hastened to England, and passed some time, I believe, in harmony with your mother, on whom he fondly deoted: she was, however, on very cool terms with his parents, and his cousin Charles; the latter she never forgave, for having attempted to dissuade Mr. Temple from marrying her: and Charles, formerly so fond of

his cousin, was become gloomy, and averse to living with him, on any footing of intimacy, merely on account of his dislike to his wife.

About three years after your father's marriage, the family received a considerable accession of fortune, by the death of your uncle Roseville, whose name they took. And now a great change was perceived in your father's disposition; from being remarkably lively and good humoured, he grew splenetic, and dissatisfied with every thing; which the world did not scruple to say was occasioned by your mother's ill conduct. His father's sudden death, which happened soon after his acquisition of the Roseville estate, affected him very deeply; perhaps the more, from having so little consolation at home; and his domestic unhappiness daily encreasing, he determined once more to go abroad, whither Doctor Sandolph accompanied him. Before he went, he called upon me to desire I would make his will; I asked him, if it should be made conformably to the settlement that had been made on Lady Roseville and his child, immediately after his father's death.

And he answered, "I shall make no change in what I settled upon Lady Roseville; unhappy as she has made me, I still remember I once loved her; but I shall make no addition to her jointure; a decent provision will suffice. As for Louisa," and he sighed deeply, "I am fond of the little thing; and instead of ten thousand pounds, I shall bequeath her my estate in Kent. The Roseville estate, you know, is entailed in the male line;—Charles must have that; and my personal fortune will do little more than discharge my debts, (most of them contracted by my wife) and pay a few legacies."

After

After this, I saw poor Sir Edward no more ; a decline, brought on by vexation, terminated in Flanders, his short and unhappy life.

Sir Charles Roseville immediately took possession of all his property, except Cherry-dale (the estate in Kent). He had ever retained a tender regard for his cousin, though he had seen little of him after his marriage ; nor was he on good terms with the Dowager Lady Roseville ; an unfortunate misunderstanding subsisted between them, not likely to be made up, as she had, ever since her husband's death, lived abroad ; but Sir Charles always mentions her with respect.

I was surprized to find how much he was concerned at Sir Edward's death—I should have thought, since he was to be so considerable a gainer by it, he might easily have consoled himself."

" People's feelings," said Louisa, " are more or less delicate, according to their character."

" Sir Charles," continued Bangrove, " would never take the least notice of your mother ; he could not even bear to hear her spoken of ; and I will not conceal from you, Madam, (excuse my freedom) that he doubted much your right to the name of Roseville."

Louisa blushed ; Mrs. Raby looked displeased ; and both recalled to mind Sir Charles Roseville's odd behaviour, which tended to confirm what Bangrove had hinted, who proceeded as follows :

" According to Sir Edward's last injunction, to his friend Doctor Sandolph, you were placed under your grandmother's protection ; and the present Lady Roseville, being free from all cares, and little troubled at her husband's death, removed to

York, where she passed some years in a course of uninterrupted gaiety.

She had no acquaintance in London, otherwise a provincial town would not have been the place of her residence ; by degrees she moved in a larger sphere ; and about six years since, having formed an acquaintance with Lady Bridget Wilford, she insinuated herself so much into her ladyship's favour, that she pressed her to go to London, where she promised to introduce her to her numerous acquaintance.

The proposal was too agreeable to be rejected ; and your mother took the house you remember, in Welbeck-street. I now had the honour of seeing her frequently ; from that period she consulted me in all her affairs ; and I may say, my influence over her was unbounded, 'till she attracted the notice of Sir Ralph Random. He followed her so assiduously, that the world thought he meant to marry her ; but that was not his view. He soon discovered, that it would be no very difficult matter to establish a connection upon a much easier footing ; and this was infinitely more agreeable to Lady Roseville.

Her marriage with your father, had already given her rank, and a competency ; but she had found the marriage chains too heavy, to wish to wear them a second time : besides too, she hoped to gain sufficient influence over the Baronet, to procure herself every *douceur* she desired, without parting with her liberty. But in this she was greatly mistaken ; Sir Ralph is by nature tyrannical, and penurious ; and though he has at times shewn a contrary disposition in his conduct towards her, it has never been without doing violence to himself,

himself, and merely from an apprehension of her breaking entirely with him.

Habit rendered her necessary to his happiness; —and the impossibility of existing without an attachment, added to his being sometimes convenient to her in pecuniary affairs, rendered him as essential to her's.

Such was the situation of things, when you came from abroad. I pass over (for you are already acquainted with those) all the *manœuvres*, that were made to obtain the care of your person, and proceed to tell you, (what I long since suspected) that in a secret treaty between Lady Roseville, and Lord Pompoufton, concluded very soon after your arrival, it was stipulated, that on the day of your marriage with him, he should take up a bond which he had given Sir Ralph for one thousand pounds; and his Lordship, moreover promised, that he would make her quite easy in her affairs.

Sir Ralph, who was informed of this agreement, though he mortally hates Lord Pompoufton, became interested in his success; because he despaired of recovering his money by any other means: hence arose all the persecutions you endured.

Your mother herself was deceived, in regard to Lord Pompoufton's wealth: his rental indeed, is very large, but he has deeply involved his estate, and has long been in the Jews hands. Lady Bridget Wilford, who has a blind partiality for him, would naturally have wished him to marry his cousin, had she not been poor: your fortune, Miss Roseville, is far inferior to what she could have desired, but as you have ready money, and as her nephew was really enamoured with you, she joined in the confederacy.

Sir Ralph seeing your repugnance to this desired match, apprehended it would not take place; and insensibly grew out of humour. He saw too, that Lady Roseville daily launched forth into fresh extravagances, and totally disregarded his representations. Several times he was on the point of breaking with her entirely, but still she found means to pacify him, and after some violent scenes, things went on in their old course.

During Lady Roseville's abode at Stretely, she made Sir Ralph understand the necessity of an apparent rupture, the better to accomplish their end; for having met Lord Pompouston at L. Castle, she had renewed her treaty with him, which several circumstances before she left town, had made them despair of bringing to a conclusion; but now she had consented to a measure which his Lordship had proposed, and to ensure it success, she thought it of the utmost importance to conciliate your affection, and not to give you umbrage by receiving Sir Ralph's visits.

Thus she put you entirely off your guard; and every thing went on very smoothly, 'till Mrs. Dinley's unexpected arrival somewhat discomposed her. This lady had been the confidante of the intrigues of her youth; they had been the dearest of friends at Cambridge, and she dreaded the communications she might make.

Soon after, by your escaping from Lord Pompouston, and withdrawing yourself out of her reach, she was disappointed of all the favourite schemes of her heart; nor did she receive the consolation she expected from Sir Ralph, to whom she immediately imparted what had happened; for several days elapsed, before he sent her any answer. At last a very angry letter came from him,
with

with a sharp rebuke, at her having exposed herself so unbecomingly in the affair of the elopement; and a request that she would without delay take up her bond for the thousand pounds he had lent her, as he had immediate occasion for that sum.

The very moment she had read this letter, she ordered her carriage, and set out in a violent rage for Richmond Green; where Sir Ralph had taken a house for the summer. He was denied to her; but she declared she would herself see whether he was out, or not; and forcing her way into the parlour, she found Sir Ralph with a fine shewy woman, taking their coffee sociably together. This sight added to her fury; she broke out into very violent language, and the lady, who perhaps had often heard the like, shewed herself expert at resenting it; for catching up a cup of hot coffee, she threw it in Lady Roseville's face.

Sir Ralph, probably thinking that his female friends, were quite equal to the task of settling their own quarrel, prudently slipped away, while Lady Roseville was employed in wiping her face and neck; who no sooner perceived his flight, than she hurried after him, without venturing to provoke her antagonist further; but finding her search after Sir Ralph fruitless, she returned, bursting with rage and resentment to Portman-square.

The next morning as she was stepping into her carriage with an intention of coming to Lincoln's-Inn, to complain to me of her grievances, which she never failed to do when any thing went wrong, though she neglected and treated me very haughtily at other times; just then, as she was coming to me, two ill-looking fellows produced a writ against her, at the suit of her old friend Sir Ralph Ran-

dom. At first, she loudly exclaimed against his treachery, and protested she would not stir; but finding the men not to be moved by prayers or menaces, she became quiet and sullen; and with apparent composure, only desired she might be suffered to step to her apartment to fetch some papers of consequence; the bailiff, she said, was welcome to accompany her: accordingly this favour was granted; she was seen to dart towards the mantle piece, and to drink up the contents of a phial———."

"My God!" exclaimed Louisa, "what was it?"

"I understand, Madam," answered Bangrove, "that it was a sort of lotion, she used for her complexion; probably composed (as the physicians think) chiefly of white lead: the bailiff however, naturally supposed it was some cordial she had taken; and as soon as she had got her papers, she suffered herself to be put into a hackney coach, and carried to the Sheriff's Officer's house. All at once, while they were on their way, she clapped her hands together, and staring wildly, exclaimed, "Oh God! what have I done! O Sir, I am poisoned!"

The bailiff suspecting this was some trick to get away, carelessly said, "he warranted her Ladyship had taken nothing, but what was very good; he could have wished she had spared him a drop."

Lady Roseville, who now most heartily repented her rash action, which she has since said, the violence of her despair, and her rage against Sir Ralph, had impelled her to commit,—persisted in saying, she was poisoned, and called vehemently for help. Indeed, she looked so dreadfully, that the Bailiff began to be somewhat alarmed, 'till he

he had settled in his own mind, that she was gone mad.

In this condition, she arrived at Mr. Soane's house ; and the violent sickness and cold sweat which trickled down her face, plainly proved that she was very ill ; however, it was some time before she could make the people of the house understand what she had done ; but her agonies which increased every instant, obliged them to send for a physician, and at the same time, by her desire, they informed me of what had happened.

I went directly to Lady Roseville, and found her in a deplorable condition. Part of what I have related, I gathered from some letters she gave me to read, and the rest from herself, when she was able to speak.

I lost no time in sending an express to you, Miss Roseville ; and I sent for Mrs. Lacely to wait upon her lady. Then I went to Portman-square, where I found every thing in sad confusion, and an execution in the house ; for Lady Roseville had not been sincere in the disclosure of her debts. I contrived however, to save your effects, Madam, from plunder ; they are safe.

Thus, Madam, I have given you, to the best of my abilities, a true and faithful narration of this tragical event ; produced intirely by the indulgence of criminal passions ; for Lady Roseville's fortune, and situation in life were such, that she might have been as happy as respectable.

If I have been betrayed into too great a freedom of speech, in the course of this detail, I crave your pardon, Madam ; assuring you I meant no harm, for there is no lady living, whom I respect so much as yourself."

Louisa

Louisa said, that unfortunately circumstances had been such, as to render it necessary in some degree to dispense with delicacy, but that she hoped he would conceal from the world what had happened, and, if possible, save her mother's fame from disgrace. She then gracefully thanked him for his attentions to her mother and self; and retired with Mrs. Raby, quite sick at heart, owing to the painful sensations she had endured during this recital.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXVII.

LADY Roseville's disorder now seemed to take a different turn ; she was become more calm, but she suffered in every limb with cramp and convulsive spasms ; she dozed perpetually, but seemed not refreshed ; loathed all food, and when she spoke, it was generally in an incoherent manner. The physician said she might last some days in this way.

Louisa, to be ready at all times to attend her mother, had a mattress spread on the floor in her chamber ; and except during a short visit which she received every morning from Mrs. Raby, for three days and nights she never left her chamber. But her health suffered from her confinement, and still more from her anxiety.

The post now brought her a letter from Doctor Sandolph, which had followed her from Weymouth.

The good old man, who at the time he wrote to her, knew nothing of her present melancholy situation, began his letter, by congratulating her on her escape from Lord Pompoufton, whose base conduct he mentioned with abhorrence. He was rather less severe in his animadversions on Lady Roseville, out of delicacy to Louisa ; but he quite approved of her resolution never to return home, and advised her to continue with her amiable friend, Mrs. Raby, 'till he could find an eligible residence for her. He lamented, that a severe fit of the gout, which had seized him immediately after his return from Wales, prevented his attending her at Weymouth ; and added, " tho'
I can-

I cannot have the happiness of seeing my dear child at present, at least I have the comfort of viewing her resemblance. My niece, who has really a great genius for painting, has contrived, from memory, to produce a most beautiful portrait of you. The Duke, and Lord William, are paying great court to her, to do a copy of it for them, particularly the latter, who, but for one circumstance, would be in love with you; but nobody, without your permission, shall have a picture of you, excepting myself."

This letter darted a ray of light into Louisa's mind, and convinced her she had wronged Lord Danefield. She now found a key to those expressions, which had so severely chagrined her, in the scrap of the letter she had found at Mrs. Stanford's, and could no longer doubt that Lord William was the writer of it.

In the evening, while she was musing over Doctor Sandolph's letter, she received a note from Mrs. Raby, excusing herself, on account of a violent cold, for not having called upon her that day, and earnestly pressing her, if Lady Roseville was tolerably composed, to go out for an hour to take the air, for which purpose she had sent her carriage.

Louisa, who longed to justify Lord Danefield to her friend, thought, as Lady Roseville was asleep, she might venture to absent herself from home a short time, and stepping into the carriage, ordered the servant to drive to Hill-street. Mrs. Raby had no difficulty in believing that Lord Danfield had not been unfaithful to her friend, who, she imagined, possessed sufficient merit to fix any heart; and she did not doubt being able very speedily to remove his jealous suspicions the
fir

first time she should see him : the hurry and confusion, in which she had been of late, had not made her unmindful of Louisa's concerns ; and she had sent to Lord Danefield to acquaint him she was in town ; but from Mrs. Stanford she learned, that he was gone into the country for a few days, so she was obliged to postpone her explanation 'till his return.

Louisa, always uneasy about her mother, staid a very little while in Hill-street ; and having no scruple of calling upon Mrs. Stanford, since Lord Danefield was absent, she thought she would, in her way home, just stop at her door, that she might not appear quite negligent of a person who had been so kind to her.

It was near dusk when the carriage stopped at Mrs. Stanford's door ; but there was sufficient light for her to distinguish the fine figure of a gentleman, who seemed just to have alighted from his horse, and had the knocker in his hand, when, upon seeing a servant advance towards the door, he turned round, and discovered to Louisa a form, seldom absent from her thoughts, that of Lord Danefield himself !

He recognized her at the same moment, his first impulse seemed to be to fly towards her, but a second thought probably checked him, for he only bowed very gravely. Louisa, scarcely knowing what she did, bowed in her turn. The door remained shut.

Lord Danefield, somewhat recovered from his first surprize, had leisure to cast some glances towards the carriage ; and perceiving how extremely pale and wan Louisa looked, every sentiment gave way to apprehension. " Are you ill, Miss Roseville ?" said he, drawing near to the coach door.

" Not

" Not very well, my Lord," and a tear stood in her eye.

" Good God ! what is the matter ? Has any misfortune befallen you ?"

" Why should your Lordship enquire ? Nothing that concerns me, can be interesting to you."

" Not interesting to *me* !"

A maid at that instant opened the door, and said her mistress was gone out. Lord Danefield had been too much affected by Louisa's last words, to attend to any thing else ; he had opened the coach door, and was letting down the step, to hand her out, when she interrupted him,

" Mrs. Stanford, Lord Danefield, is not at home."

" How unlucky ;" cried he, clapping his hand to his forehead, " this moment might have brought ease to my tortured mind. Let me attend you home."

" That cannot be, my Lord."

" When, and where then, will you see me ?" said he, eagerly.

" Alas ! my Lord, I know not ; I have no habitation fit to receive you in ; am in a small lodging with my mother, who, I fear, is dying."

" And where, dear Louisa," cried Lord Danefield, quite melted into love and pity ; " where is this lodging ?"

" On Holborn Hill."

" Good God ! what a place ; What can occasion her being there ? You distract me with apprehensions. And are you now going home ?"

" This instant."

" O Louisa, dear Louisa, I must see you ; I fear I have been greatly to blame."

" I must

“ I must hasten home. We have both been to blame, but at present I must bid you adieu.”

This conversation appeared to Louisa like a dream ; but it was so soothing to her heart, that she could have wished never to have awaked again ; and Lady Roseville passing a very quiet night, Louisa herself rested better than usual.

Early next morning, she was told somebody wished to speak with her, and she found Lord Danefield in the parlour ; immediately after he had parted from her the preceding night, he hastened to see Mrs. Raby, and received from her such a thorough explanation of all that had created a misunderstanding between him and Louisa, that he felt nothing but compunction for his own behaviour, and excessive sorrow that she had been exposed to such shocking scenes as those Mrs. Raby described. Before she had been thus explicit with him, she had exacted his solemn promise, that whatever he might hear, he should not fancy himself obliged to become Louisa's champion ; but in her recital, Mrs. Raby took care to soften some circumstances relative to Lord Pompouston's conduct at Weymouth, lest he should forget his promise.

Lord Danefield's indignation did indeed run very high ; but the assurance he received of Louisa's tender attachment to him, made every angry passion subside into joy and transport. He would have gone that very evening to have seen Louisa, had not Mrs. Raby prevented him. But nothing could hinder his going to her very early the following morning ; and as soon as she appeared, he bent one knee, and seizing her hand, “ can you,” cried he, “ beloved Louisa, forgive my
hor-

horrible injustice? I have seen Mrs. Raby; I need add no more; indeed I am truly grieved, and ashamed to think, that I should have contributed to the sufferings of an angel, for such your fortitude, on the most trying occasions, entitles you to be called."

"You must not be severe upon yourself, Lord Danefield," said she, "I too have been unjust, and perhaps have less to say in my excuse. But if you feel like me, all that we have suffered from our absurd suspicions, is made up to us, by the satisfaction we mutually find in this moment, of restored confidence."

Lord Danefield confessed this was true; and a very tender conversation ensued. In talking over what had passed, he observed, that after having obtained Lord Melvern's consent (given, he owned, with reluctance) to act as he pleased, she must imagine what his agonies must have been, when he found (as he thought) all his hopes blasted, and heard his rival brag of her kindness!

It was natural both parties should be eager to have the mystery of the letters Lord Danefield said he had written, cleared up; and Louisa wishing to know how he had obtained Lord Melvern's consent, he gave the following account of what had passed, subsequent to the time he had left her at Stretley.

He said, that on his return to Melvern, he found Lord Melvern so ill, that it was impossible to think of speaking to him on the business he had so much at heart; and after waiting a couple of days, without finding one favourable moment, he had written to her to inform her of this.

"Which letter never reached me," said Louisa, interrupting him.

"It

"It was certainly stopped by Lady Roseville," said Lord Danefield; "however, you may imagine that I was not a little mortified at not hearing from you."

He then said, in continuation, that the physicians having advised Lord Melvern, to go to Aix-la-Chapelle, his Lordship set out for that place, and he came to town to mount guard, with a resolution of following Lord Melvern. No letter coming from Louisa, and the most alarming accounts arriving of the increase of Lord Melvern's disorder, he grew quite wretched; and the day before he left London (for he had delayed his journey from day to day, hoping still he should hear from her) he thought he would call at Lady Roseville's house, and enquire whether the family was still at Stretley; but to his surprize, he saw Lady Roseville just alighting from her carriage. He thought he observed that she coloured at sight of him, but quickly recovering herself, she said, with a smiling air, "the person for whom I suspect this visit was intended, is not here; I left her in Shropshire, being come to town only for a few days;" and perceiving that out of civility, he seemed inclined to follow her, she said,

"I don't ask your Lordship to come, as I am going to dress in great haste, to be ready to accompany a party to dine in the country."

"Good Good!" cried Louisa, "why I must have been at that time in her house!"

Lord Danefield continued, "not having the least suspicion that Lady Roseville had deceived me, I wrote to you again, directing my letter as before, to Stretley, and then I hastened to *Aix-la-Chapelle*; where I had the comfort of finding Lord Melvern in a very fair way of recovery.

I imme-

I immediately made a candid disclosure of the state of my heart, assuring him at the same time, that though I could not in honour pretend to Lady Almeria's hand, my affections being devoted to another, yet such was my respect for him, that nothing should induce me to form any connection, which he did not approve of: but that I thought, just and discerning as I knew him to be, that the merit of the object I adored was such, as could not fail of obtaining his sanction to an union, on which my happiness depended.

Lord Melvern looked chagrined, but said, that whatever disappointment he might feel on this occasion, he was sensible he had no right to controul me; that since I had not been able to bestow my affections on his daughter, he must confess, our union could not have made those objects most dear to him, happy in each other; that he was glad in an affair of such consequence as an establishment for life, I had not been guided merely by passion; as he had heard you had great merit, and that he rejoiced the lady I had chosen was descended from a very ancient honourable family, adhering to his opinion, that fortune was less to be considered than blood. But, added he, "'tis lucky that here there is fortune likewise; for you have, I am sorry to say, but too much occasion for it."

Then assuring me, that I had been perfectly right in believing he never would withhold his consent to any measure wherein my happiness was concerned, he begged leave, he said, to remind me, that some little delicacy being due to Lady Almeria, he could wish that my marriage were not concluded 'till I came of age, which would be in a very few months, and in the mean while not

to

to suffer it to be spoken of, as it would have a better appearance to the world, that the objection to the union projected for me with Lady Almeria, should seem to originate with her. He then added, that every thing in his power should be done, to settle to my satisfaction the pecuniary affairs between us.

You may believe, my dear Louisa," continued Lord Danefield, "that it was not without the greatest reluctance I could consent to postpone my happiness a moment, much less three or four months. However I could not refuse to concede to my estimable friend's wishes.

And having thus settled this interesting business, and avoided an explanation with Lady Almeria, which must have been very awkward to us both, her father himself undertaking it, after a very short stay at *Aix-la-Chapelle*, I returned to London, impatient to throw myself at your feet. There, I learned from my sister, that you and Lady Roseville were separated; that she had had the happiness of your company for near a week, and that you were gone to Mrs. Raby at Weymouth.

I staid only one night in town, so eager was I to see you, though rather piqued at your never writing to me.

I will pass over the scene at Weymouth; the remembrance of it fills me with anger against myself. When I got back to London, my sister seeing me in a state bordering on distraction, prevailed on me to reveal the cause to her. She seemed extremely surprized when I told her the good understanding between you and Lord Pom-poufton. Some expressions escaped her, which excited my curiosity, and finding I would be satisfied,

tified, she owned that nothing could amaze her more than this circumstance, after what she knew had recently passed; and then she told me of Lord Pompoufton's abominable attempt to carry you to Scotland. I had a great mind to have returned to Weymouth to have seen him once more; but I forbore, out of respect to you, who seemed to have entirely forgiven him.

Mrs. Stanford, however, was still convinced, that you did not mean to marry him; and she suggested the notion, that Lady Roseville, who had taken such unworthy methods to promote an union between you and that vile man, had not thought it expedient that any of my letters should reach you.

This indeed I began myself to think; but I retained my suspicions, that Lord Pompoufton had at last conciliated your affection, and in this frame of mind, I had the audacity to write a very angry letter to you——"

Here Lord Danefield was interrupted by a message from Lady Roseville to Louisa, desiring to see her instantly; and the latter excusing herself from returning to him again that morning, he departed, after a tender farewell, assuring her, that he hoped the following day to receive a positive promise from her, that she would bless him with her hand, the very day after he should come of age.

There were two subjects on which Louisa wished to confer with her mother. One was, to prevail upon her to suffer a clergyman to come and read prayers to her. The other, to unfold to her the prospect she had of being united to an amiable man; not doubting, but that as Lady Roseville really thought herself dying, and had
shewn

shewn some affection for her since her illness, it would afford her great comfort to know that she would not be left unprotected.

At the first mention of prayers, Lady Roseville exclaimed, "pray don't tease me. I neglected praying when I was well and happy—and now—No, I can't think of it."

Louisa ventured however to re-urge her request, telling her that repentance, and a hearty inclination to do right, would, she humbly hoped, procure from a merciful God, pardon for past omissions.

"Omissions! say rather commissions!" cried Lady Roseville; "but 'tis-too late to repent now, and this subject only renews the horrors of my mind."

"And what, my dear mother, could compose your mind so well, as the conversation of some pious sensible divine?"

"No more. Oh! for one moment of peace here!" cried she, laying her hand on her breast.

Louisa, inexpressibly shocked, continued silent some time; at last, however, she hinted that she had seen Lord Danefield, whose intended marriage being broken off, he had made her proposals, which, she hoped, would meet with her approbation.

"My approbation was not asked," said she, "when first he proposed to you; I am not ignorant of that transaction. My death will soon enable you to follow your own inclinations; had you shewn more complaisance to mine, I should not now have been in this miserable condition."

Louisa, secretly disgusted at her indelicacy, in recurring to a subject, in which she had acted so culpable a part, only took notice of the first part
of

of this speech, forbearing to mortify her, by enquiring how she had gained her intelligence ; and said, that it was true, Lord Danefield had mentioned to her, in Shropshire, his wish of being united to her ; but that she had rendered Lord Melvern's consent a previous condition to granting her's ; and that she had deferred communicating this matter, 'till she knew Lord Melvern's sentiments ; never, however, intending to be deficient in the duty and respect due to her—and then she timidly asked, whether she would allow Lord Danefield to see her for a moment.

“ No,” cried she angrily, “ not for an instant ; I never liked that man.”

Louisa, vexed and afflicted, refrained from attempting to mollify a disposition, which even on the brink of the grave, retained its wonted bad propensities.

The truth was, Lady Roseville having, in fact, intercepted Lord Danefield's letters (which were found among her papers) and told him a positive lie, was ashamed to see him ; not possessing that greatness of mind, which prompts many to confess, and atone for their errors.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the morning, Louisa finding her mother as well as she had been the preceding evening, did not send to forbid Lord Danefield's visit. He arrived just as she was sitting down to breakfast. His countenance beamed with tenderness—"Ah, my Louisa," cried he, after the first salutation "how could I wound your gentle heart, by sending you that vile letter? I do assure you, no sooner was it gone past recall, than I repented having sent it; nor can you conceive a being more wretched than I was from that time, till I met you at my sister's door. I was then just returned from the country, whither I flew to try to dissipate my chagrin; but I could not fly from myself—think then, what I must have felt, when chance brought you before me, pale, dejected, and interesting beyond description.

Now, my beloved, I claim your promise to unfold to me, all that you have thought of your Danefield."

Louisa, unacquainted with coquetry; tender, delicate, and generous in her sentiments; now that all obstacles and jealousies were removed, frankly avowed to Lord Danefield, the partiality she had so long felt in his favour.

Enraptured by a confession so delicious to a lover, he had fallen on one knee before her; and while he ardently pressed her hand to his lips, entreated her to promise, that nothing should

prevent their union ; and that from that moment, he might be allowed to consider her as his wife elect.

Louisa was just going to give him this satisfaction, when the door bounced open, and Mrs. Dinley appeared. Nothing could be more *mal à propos* than her arrival—Louisa, blushing deeply, and vexed to be thus surprized, stood motionless ; and Lord Danefield (who had quickly got upon his legs) was so provoked at this woman's intrusion, that he advanced a few paces towards her, with a fierceness of aspect, that brought Louisa to her recollection, and courtseying formally, she desired her to be seated.

Mrs. Dinley, who was naturally quick sighted, perceived she was a very unwelcome visitor. Louisa indeed, had taken no great fancy to her before ; and Bangrove's relation, had not raised her in her esteem.

Mrs. Dinley said, she was just arrived in town ; whither she had come on hearing of her poor friend's illness, whom she desired to see immediately.

Louisa offering to prepare Lady Roseville for her visit, Lord Danefield judged it prudent to depart.

Louisa, no sooner mentioned Mrs. Dinley's arrival, than her mother exclaimed with a very disturbed air, " Good God ! what can bring her, and at this moment too ? " when pausing, " tell her I can't see her ; indeed I can't."

" O, no ; I don't know what to do—she must not be affronted—tell her I am very ill—yet—perhaps I ought—no, no ; I can't."

At last, after a painful conflict with herself, and wavering in this manner for a quarter of an hour,

hour, she ordered her to be admitted, and said, she must speak with her alone.

The conversation lasted so long, that Louisa became extremely uneasy on her mother's account, who she apprehended, would be quite wearied out : while she was debating with herself, whether she ought not to interrupt it, she was summoned, and found Lady Roseville just coming out of a fit, and so visibly altered for the worse in her looks, as to alarm her exceedingly. She was going out, to give orders for the physician to be sent for, when Mrs. Dinley, who seemed likewise to have been affected, stopped her. " Stay, Miss Roseville," said she, " I am charged to make a very disagreeable discovery to you ; but Lady Roseville is at last convinced, that her mind will be lighter, when she is no longer conscious of an imposition."

Louisa trembled ; she opened her mouth, as if to speak ; her hands were involuntarily raised, and she waited in silent horror, for Mrs. Dinley to continue.

" Be not shocked, Madam," said she, " tho' you are not Sir Edward Roseville's daughter, you owe your birth to a man of high rank ; who, were he now alive, would, upon hearing he had such a daughter, traverse half the globe, to fold you to his breast ; he was the most gentle and tender of mankind."

" Almighty God !" cried Louisa, " what is it I hear ? O hasten to relieve me from this cruel suspense—was Prince *Ormanzoff* my father ?"

At the sound of this name, Lady Roseville uttered a faint scream. " Too sure he was," cried she, cruel wretch that I was ! Ah ! *Ormanzoff* !—injured *Ormanzoff* !" and heaving a

dreadful groan, she appeared for a few moments convulsed, with excruciating agonies; and these all at once subsiding, her eyes closed, never to open more.

Louisa, who had been trying to give her some relief, finding none could be given, overcome with grief and horror, sunk down in a deep swoon by the side of the bed.

Mrs. Dinley, having called some assistance, conveyed her to the adjoining room, where, with proper assistance, after some time, she recovered.

Mrs. Raby, who, in the interim, had arrived, insisted upon her immediate removal from this sad scene.

"Ah! no," cried Louisa mournfully, "no; would you have me neglect the last sad duties due to my unfortunate mother?"

Mrs. Dinley assured her, that she would undertake to perform them. "Nothing that is proper, shall be omitted;" said she. "Do, Miss Roseville, pray be persuaded to let that task devolve upon me?"

"Roseville! do you still call me?" eagerly exclaimed Louisa, "that name henceforth cannot belong to me."

Mrs. Raby, who was ignorant of the late discovery, apprehending her friend's intellects were affected, conjured her, if she had the least regard for her, not to refuse accompanying her home; reminding her, that she could be no longer of any use to her mother, and to stay there, could only injure her health.

Louisa, without seeming to attend to her, sat silent, with her eyes stupidly fixed on the ground.

Mrs. Raby, finding nothing she could urge, produced the least change in her friend, which

in

in her ear, "my dear Louisa, if you don't mind distressing your poor Emily, at least, for Danefield's sake, do not refuse to take care of yourself;" gently endeavouring to make her rise.

"Danefield!" cried Louisa, as if suddenly awaking from a deep sleep. "Danefield! Oh God!" and she put her hand before her eyes; and her breast heaving violently, at length she burst into tears. Mrs. Raby did not attempt to stop them, but when the first effusion was past, she again urged her departure, to which Louisa consented, not having spirits to argue on the propriety of her stay.

Just as they were leaving the room, Lord Danefield, who had loitered in the neighbourhood, impatient to see Louisa again, and to hear her finally settle his fate, finding the door of the house open, Mrs. Raby's servants standing by, waiting for their lady, walked straight into the parlour; and immediately guessed, by the confusion he observed, that Lady Roseville was dead.

Louisa's back was turned, so that she did not see him enter; but hearing the door shut, she looked round, O Heaven!" cried she, sinking into a chair.

Lord Danefield flew to her, "my love! my angel!" cried he, in a half whisper, "I could not rest till I had seen you again. Be comforted; your Danefield will dry your tears."

"Leave me, my Lord," cried Louisa, in a faint voice, "I am going hence this instant. Ah! Lord Danefield, you know not the cruel stroke that has fallen upon me—happiness is for ever fled!"

"O no," cried Lord Danefield, "talk not so; this event you have long expected, and you will bear it with your wonted fortitude."

“ Ah ! you know not all—but—adieu, my Lord ! Adieu, dear Lord Danefield ! ” and Louisa, with a very animated action, took his hand, and pressing it tenderly between hers, cast her eyes upon him with a look of such tenderness and unutterable woe, as melted him to the soul ; and then taking Mrs. Raby under the arm, hurried into the carriage.

Immediately on her arrival in Hill-street, Mrs. Raby, perceiving she seemed excessively ill, and that she complained of a violent pain in the head, with a tightness across her chest, prevailed on her to go to bed ; but not till she had informed her of the closing scene of her mother's life, which amazed and shocked Mrs. Raby, who could not help secretly wishing the discovery of Louisa's birth, seemingly so painful to her delicacy, had not been made.

Towards night Louisa grew so much worse, that Mrs. Raby, who had not left her a moment, sent for her own physician to see her.

He found her in a high fever ; and ordered her to be bled immediately ; but this operation did not seem to relieve her ; her fever continued with unabated strength, and her head became much disordered. She talked incessantly of her mother, Prince *Ormanzoff*, and of Lord Danefield. A blister was then applied, and every other remedy tried, that Doctor Janssen's skill and experience suggested. He called frequently to see her, but without finding any amendment.

In the mean while, Lord Danefield, half distracted at hearing of Louisa's illness, was seldom during the day time, out of Melcomb's house ; and frequently would steal to Louisa's door, to listen how she breathed. He insisted upon more
advice

advice being called in. The house would have been crowded with the faculty, if his representations had been attended to.

Mrs. Raby, nearly as miserable, but more composed, trusted much in Doctor Janssen's skill and in the efficacy of James's powder, which he had prescribed. The fifth day, the fever beginning to abate, Doctor Janssen had hopes of subduing it entirely, by means of that admirable medicine.

Lord Danefield seldom saw Mrs. Raby, who was usually in her friend's apartment; but the first morning that Doctor Janssen had pronounced her better, Mrs. Raby came down to impart to his Lordship the favourable change.

Lord Danefield, overjoyed at the news, actually clasped Mrs. Raby in his arms, "God Almighty be praised!" cried he; "a thousand blessings on you, for your care of her"

"Check these transports," said she; "we must not yet be too sanguine; she is still very ill."

Lord Danefield's countenance immediately fell.

"Don't cruelly crush my joy;" cried he, "don't alarm me with doubts—you know she will recover; and then she will be mine, mine for ever!"

Mrs. Raby sighed; but made no answer. And at that moment, the good Doctor Sandolph, with tottering step, and leaning upon crutches, appeared before them.

"Where, where is my child?" cried he, in a weak tremulous voice; "lead me to her this instant." And he was turning towards the stairs.

"Stop, stop, my good Sir;" cried Mrs. Raby, "your abrupt appearance might be fatal to her, so dear to us all!" looking at Lord Danefield. "Give me leave," continued she, "to

go and see how she does ; and if I find her tolerable, to prepare her to receive you."

Doctor Sandolph assented, and Mrs. Raby being gone, some tender but melancholy compliments passed between the old, and the young man.

" I should have been here long since," said the former, had I not been extremely ill myself ; and I believe the anxiety I felt about Miss Roseville, as soon as I had heard from Mr. Bangrove, of the rash act that wretched woman Lady Roseville had committed, made me much worse : However, I sat out the very moment I was able to bear the least motion ; but impatient as I have been to get to my dear Louisa, it was impossible for me to travel otherwise than by slow journies. On the road I met Mr. Bangrove's express to apprise me of Lady Roseville's death, and of my darling child's severe illness. But thank God, Mr. Melcomb, whom I have just seen, tells me she is better."

" Yes, I hope she is," cried Lord Danefield eagerly ; " yes, she is better, will soon be well, and she will be mine ; you, my dear Sir, I know will give her to me."

" Ah ! that I will with my whole soul, if Lord Melvern consents."

" He has consented ; my beloved herself has told me, that she loves me ; I remember those delightful words escaped her charming lips, and now were she but well——."

Mrs. Raby appearing at the door, beckoned Doctor Sandolph, " Come along, Sir," cried she, Louisa is quite calm, and impatient to see you."

" And may not I see her ?" cried Lord Danefield, running after Mrs. Raby, " will she not see me too ?"

" Not now, my Lord, another time perhaps."

" Per-

" Perhaps ! unkind Mrs. Raby ! Is there then a doubt of her seeing me ? "

" Detain me not at present ; to-morrow I will see you again. "

" To-morrow ! " mournfully echoed Lord Danefield, but Mrs Raby and Doctor Sandolph were already on the stairs in their way to Louisa's chamber.

The good old man's fortitude nearly forsook him, when he found his dear ward scarcely able to express her satisfaction at seeing him, otherwise than by pressing his hand, and faintly smiling upon him. Yet, the darkness of the room prevented his discovering how much she was altered.

Mrs. Raby, who had been particularly charged to keep her very quiet, would not let him stay but a very little while, and she hastened to get him back into the drawing room.

She then acquainted him with those circumstances, with which he was still unacquainted ; and he heard with the greatest amazement, the singular discovery which had preceded Lady Roseville's death.

" Louisa certainly, " said Mrs. Raby, " as she has an excellent heart, is touched at her mother's death, especially as it was brought on by such dreadful means. But, my good Sir, she was prepared for that misfortune, and in my opinion nothing has affected her so much, as to have been the subject of a culpable imposition on the Roseville family. "

The Doctor, who was an excellent man, though without any refined feelings, could not comprehend why she should be so much grieved at a circumstance of which (however odious) she was entirely innocent ; and after a little more conversation upon this subject, he was glad to go and re-

pose his feeble frame at his lodgings in Bondstreet; whither he sent to Bangrove to come to him.

Bangrove, who had long found a secret, one of the heaviest burthens in the world, hastened to tell him what he had just heard from Mrs. Raby. Mrs. Dinley having a great while before communicated to Bangrove the mystery of Louisa's birth. Nor had it been without infinite difficulty, that he had forborn (in consequence of a solemn promise she had exacted from him) to mention it to Louisa.

Doctor Sandolph observed, that it was no wonder such an accumulation of horrors, had been too much for her. "Her gentle nature," cried he, "has sunk beneath them, and God knows whether she will recover!"

A disagreeable explanation next ensued, in regard to the late Lady Roseville's affairs; she had left no will; but Doctor Sandolph, from friendship to Louisa, authorized Bangrove to make the necessary arrangements, and ordered her remains to be decently interred.

Doctor Sandolph, however curious he was to learn by what means Lady Roseville had imposed upon her husband, and his family, would not enquire into them, 'till the person whom they most concerned, was herself in a condition to hear the relation, which he understood Mrs. Dinley, was best qualified to give.

Louisa continued to mend. Doctor Sandolph the next morning had the satisfaction to hear her express the comfort she received from his visit; and the day following, she was so much better as to enter into a little conversation with him.

"You have heard, my good friend," said she, faintly, "that your poor Louisa has no name, no rank

rank in society, that she was made the instrument of imposition. But how this vile affair was contrived, is still unknown to me, and it behoves me much to know it."

"Why worry yourself, my dear child," said Doctor Sandolph, "with reflections on this matter? you are innocent; you have not sought to impose upon any one; what have you to do with the crimes of others? And very shortly, you will have both name and rank; you will be Lord Danefield's wife, who adores you."

"Spare me on this subject, my dear Sir," cried Louisa; "I am weak, very weak; but yet I must tell you that I can never, no never, bear the name of Danefield."

"What am I mistaken; do you not love him then?"

"Love him!" cried Louisa, "he is dearer to me than life itself; yet——," she paused.

"I am all amazement! What love him, and yet protest you will not marry him! Why, my dear Louisa, what can this mean?"

"I am not able to give my reasons now, for what seems an inconsistency to you."

"The subject indeed, had better not be discussed at present; think of nothing now but your health. I will see you again very soon, and shall hope to find you well, and *reasonable*." Which last word was said with a strong emphasis, as he left the room.

In the mean while Lord Danefield, whose heart was gladdened by the accounts he heard of Louisa's amended health, demanded to see her with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. And Louisa, though her heart shrunk from this interview, desired him to be informed, that she would see him, the first day her strength would permit

permit her going down into the drawing-room, with which delay he most reluctantly acquiesced.

It was with infinite concern, that Mrs. Raby perceived the deep melancholy that seemed settled on Louisa's spirits. Formerly the name of Lord Danefield, (except during an interval of jealousy) had a magic influence over her countenance, animating it with joy and delight : but now, it only added to it a more expressive character of anguish ; and Mrs. Raby too plainly discovered, that from an excess of delicacy, she would not in the humble state, in which she was thought by herself alone, consent to marry Lord Danefield.

Louisa now became very impatient to see Mrs. Dinley ; and as she was so much better, her friends consented to the admission of this woman, who had frequently called to enquire after her health during her illness ; and a day being fixed for her dining in Hill-street ; she came accordingly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOUISA desired Mrs. Raby, and Doctor Sandolph, to be present at her interview with Mrs. Dinley. It was not without visible emotion, that she received her ; all the sensations of horror, grief, and astonishment, which she had felt when first the fatal discovery was made, now re-
 curred again.

But she endeavoured at composure, while she addressed Mrs. Dinley as follows :

“ Nothing certainly can be more painful to a daughter, or more contrary to the general order of nature, than for her to scrutinize into the conduct of her parent. But such is my unpleasant situation, that though I could wish to consign to oblivion, the memory of those actions, that being disclosed, must criminate my mother ; yet, it seems a justice due to myself, before I finally determine what reparation is due to the Roseville family, clearly to have the fact ascertained, that a supposititious child, has been introduced into it.

Do not, therefore, I conjure you, conceal from me any circumstance relative to this affair : if you were unhappily drawn in to be a party concerned in it, you have since had leisure to repent ; and certainly cannot refuse to make every atonement in your power.

Possibly a mistaken idea of friendship, might have occasioned you to deceive yourself, and not to consider that this action militates against every idea of honour and justice.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Dinley looked extremely abashed, and Louisa, willing to encourage her, added, "I do not wish to give you pain, I am only desirous of inducing you to be sincere in the confession I require. You seemed surprised at my having mentioned (Alas ! very unfortunately) Prince *Ormanzoff's* name : I shall therefore inform you, that chance brought me intimately acquainted with him just before he died ; and that I am in possession of papers, which detail the whole of his sad story.— Here is his picture, which he bequeathed to me. Alas ! he little thought that the bequest was made to his own daughter !"

"It is very like what I remember him to have been," said Mrs. Dinley, "and the first time I had the honour of seeing you, I was so struck with your strong resemblance to him, that I could not help whispering it to your mother ; yet, at the same time I thought you had much of her air."

"You need only relate," said Louisa, "the transactions subsequent to my mother's marriage, as I have already told you, I know all that passed before."

"The task you have assigned me," said Mrs. Dinley, "is not a little humiliating to me, for you will perceive that it was principally by my assistance, that Lady Roseville contrived to impose upon Sir Edward, and his family. However, I submit, and hope my candour at present will induce you, not to censure my past conduct too harshly."

Whatever information you may have received from the Russian Prince, he could not tell you, (because he never was let into the secret) that all your mother's attempts to destroy the proof of her frailty, proved ineffectual. Fortunately for her, however,

however, about the time that her disgrace appeared inevitable, her husband's parents insisted upon his going abroad ; and as soon as he was at a distance that precluded his observations, Charlotte (allow me still to use that familiar appellation) announced to himself, and family, that she was with child. Your grandmother, Lady Temple, who had been but lately reconciled to her, invited her to live with her, at least during her husband's absence ; but Charlotte, who had her reasons for shunning her Ladyship, and all who might interest themselves in her condition, declined her invitation, choosing rather to live sequestered with me in a small house near York. There she was at liberty, under pretence of grief at her husband's absence, to refuse receiving much company ; and to elude even her servants penetration by passing most of her time in bed, or by never appearing but in a very great dishabille.

She did not long however enjoy quiet, for she was soon much discomposed by receiving a letter from Lady Temple, to say she meant to be with her during her lying-in. An event her Ladyship did not apprehend to be so near by several months, as it was in fact."

Charlotte, who daily expected the awful moment of her delivery to arrive, was in an agitation not to be described. At this period, I formed a plan which I communicated to her, and it revived her spirits.

As we lived but a mile from York, it was easy for me secretly to confer with the gentleman who was to attend her, during her lying-in. I had for some time, taken pains to ingratiate myself with his wife, and had made little presents to his children ; indeed, I soon found he was formed of
such

such materials, as would yield to a proper bribe. To diminish his scruples, I cooked up a mighty plausible story (at least he chose to think it so) of a private contract, having, by some months, preceded the trip to Scotland ; but that it was of the utmost consequence the family, who had been very unkind to my friend, merely owing to their pride and avarice, should not suspect this ; and I assured him that Mr. Temple himself, would be exceedingly hurt if the child's premature appearance could not be concealed. I had some difficulty to make him comprehend that my plan was feasible ; but during our argument, I contrived to slip a bank note of considerable value into his hand, which wonderfully cleared his comprehension.

The next step was, to procure a nurse we could depend upon ; and in this, Doctor Edwards assisted us. He mentioned to me the widow of a shoemaker, a poor woman with five small children, who, by the sudden death of her husband, was left in most deplorable circumstances, with a young child at her breast ; her mother, the Doctor had frequently met at the houses of his patients, where she was employed as a nurse ; she was a very notable industrious woman, and now the charge of maintaining her daughter and little family, fell heavy upon her. Both the old and young woman, were secured as parties in our scheme ; their house was in York, and we had every reason to believe none of the servants belonging to us, had the least acquaintance with them.

Every thing being thus prepared, and the family accustomed to see Doctor Edwards a frequent visitor

visitor at our house, he kept himself in readiness to attend your mother at a moment's warning.

As soon as she was taken ill, which happened one morning about seven o'clock, I immediately gave Doctor Edwards a private hint of it, and he came directly, as if by chance. No person had the least suspicion of what was passing in Charlotte's chamber; fear made her stifle her groans, and her maid Mrs. Lacely, and myself, were her only attendants: the month nurse we had hired, being reserved for another occasion, as you will hear presently.

Your mother was ill a very short time, before she was happily delivered of you; whom I immediately put into a basket, which I was accustomed to carry on my arms when I strolled about the garden, and fill it with flowers. With this basket I sallied forth, directing my steps as usual to the garden, where, at a private door that opened into a field, the old woman was in waiting to receive the infant.

As soon as I had delivered my charge to her, I filled my basket with flowers, and returned to the house; and Mrs. Lacely and myself neglected no prudent measures to prevent our secret being divulged.

The second day Charlotte, who was believed by the servants to have been slightly indisposed, had the resolution to rise and shew herself without affectation, as a thing of course, in her dressing-room: and the first occasion that seemed naturally to occur for my going to York, I went thither and paid you a visit. I found you a fine thriving child, and extremely well taken care of, by both your nurses. We had provided you ordinary clothes, as any thing in the least fine, might have
excited

excited the curiosity of the neighbours, by whom you were supposed to be a tradesman's child, taken in by dame Ansel to nurse.

In the mean while another letter arrived from Lady Temple, to enquire precisely when her daughter-in-law expected to be confined ; still flattering herself, she said, that her health would admit of her attendance on her."

To which Charlotte replied, that she did not expect this event to happen in much less than three months ; and assured Lady Temple she should find great comfort in her presence. But as nothing in reality was dreaded half so much, we resolved that when she had been married seven months, she should appear to be taken suddenly ill, and with all due form, be brought to bed of you, before Lady Temple could possibly arrive."

It was much less difficult to act this farce, than to execute what we had done a month before, with such happy success. The woman, who suckled you, was hired as a wet nurse ; and her mother was sent for to attend Mrs. Temple. These women, Mrs. Lacely, the Doctor, and myself, being the only persons admitted into her chamber, we all executed our parts with great decorum ; and after a reasonable time, such as might naturally be expected, your birth was announced to the rest of the family.

The servants were all very desirous of seeing you, but it was not convenient to indulge them with too near a view, as you were a remarkable large fine child. So you were kept in your cradle, and very little light suffered to come into the room, on account of a pretended weakness in your eyes. Indeed, they saw you very rarely, for your mother affected she could not bear you out of her sight,
and

and for many weeks you were almost always in her apartment.

And pray," interrupted Louisa, "how was I conveyed into the house?"

"Why, the evening before the representation of this farce, I went to York, accompanied by Mrs. Lacely, and brought you to the house in a band-box, pretending it came from a milliner's. But I suffered such terror by your cries all the way, though luckily they ceased before I got home, that I was obliged to carry you into a china closet in an unfrequented part of the house; and I fear you suffered a good deal that night, for want of your nurse; though I took care to feed you, and I am ashamed to say, I dosed you well with syrup of poppies, to keep you quiet."

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Raby, shrugging her shoulders, and giving Mrs. Dinley a look that very nearly sealed up her lips.

Doctor Sandolph, as usual to him when he was discomposed, had recourse to his snuff-box; taking pinch after pinch with great perseverance.

But Louisa very calmly desired Mrs. Dinley, to proceed.

"When Charlotte's feigned sufferings," continued she, "had lasted as long as we thought necessary, I seized a moment when nobody was in the way, to convey you into her apartment. The rest, I have already told you.

"Nothing now of importance remains to mention. Sir John and Lady Temple, expressed some surprize when they heard of your premature birth, but fortunately for my friend, it was some time before her Ladyship (who had been ill) was well enough to come and see her grandchild. I watched her countenance during her first visit, and observed

observed she was all amazement, at seeing such a fine forward child ; but I do not think she had any suspicions of the truth.

Mr. Temple had always protested he would not stay abroad, so long a term as his father had prescribed, but meant to be in England about the time he concluded his wife would be confined. Upon hearing that the event had already happened, he hastened home. We relied so perfectly on his youth, and inexperience in young children, as to be free from alarm on his account : nor were we mistaken ; he seemed on his arrival transported with joy at being a father, and he became fonder than ever of his wife.

For some time Mr. and Mrs. Temple lived in great harmony together ; though the latter was not quite satisfied at being kept in the country, and in a more oeconomic style, than suited with her disposition. She had expected, by marrying a man of fashion, and heir to a large fortune, that she should have indulged in every sort of luxury ; but the slender allowance Sir John Temple gave his son, did not permit him to gratify her extravagant wishes.

In the mean while, Doctor Edwards had always some pretence for coming to the house, either to see Charlotte, or her child ; his visits incommoded her extremely, and she observed, that Mr. Temple often thought them unnecessary ; but sensible how much she was in this man's power, she did not dare to affront him, and was obliged to submit to his very exorbitant charges ; so that her purse was perpetually drained by him, or the old woman. Your nurse was of a mild gentle nature ; and not in the least mercenary. People who deviate from the right road, are liable to plagues
and

and torments, of every kind ; such as others have no conception of."

Mrs. Raby, who thought that Mrs. Dinley, so far from seeming ashamed of the part she had acted, appeared rather in her narration, to value herself upon her cleverness, interrupted her.

"I should imagine," said she, "that amidst these torments, the voice of conscience, must be the most troublesome of all ; but I submit to *your* experience in this matter."

Mrs. Dinley coloured ; "I am sorry, Madam," said she, "to be so well qualified to decide, that it is indeed intolerable ; but I protest I had no motive for assisting in the deception on the Roseville family, but a tender and faithful attachment to my friend.

Sometime after Mr. Temple's return, Charlotte was released from one of her torments, by the old woman's death ; her daughter was a much better character ; and so attached to her nursling, that with a little humouring, we were tolerably easy about her.

Mr. Charles Temple, who used to be his cousin's greatest friend, had shewn no satisfaction, at the birth of his daughter ; he very rarely visited him, and never caressed the child, as every body else did. One day he surprised Doctor Edwards and myself, talking together in a corner of the hall. I was at that moment, by Charlotte's desire, giving him some money. What Mr. Charles Temple thought, I know not, or whether he overheard any part of our discourse ; but ever after, I perceived he regarded me with a jealous eye, and always looked gloomy, and out of humour.

Your mother might, had she pleased, have been perfectly happy with Mr. Temple ; for he
was

was very good humoured, lively, and agreeable; but I must say, her natural tendency to gallantry, could not be restrained; nor did she love her husband well enough to attempt concealing the delight she took in indiscriminate admiration. I ventured to represent to her, the danger she incurred of losing her husband's affections; but she never could bear controul, and disregarded all I said.

Mr. Temple, who had now taken the name of Roseville, ignorant of the pains I took to prevent Charlotte from disgracing him and herself, unjustly fancied, that I encouraged her to receive attentions from a young officer, a great favourite of her's. At first, after his marriage, he had been very kind to me; but for some time, he had treated me with a sort of distant civility, bordering upon contempt; which, together, with Charlotte's too frequent neglect of me, and inattention to her own character, made me heartily sick of my situation. About this time, Mr. Dinley (an old lover of mine) obtained a college living, which enabled him to offer me his hand; and a thousand reasons induced me to accept it.

Immediately after our marriage, we settled in Suffolk. Charlotte affected more grief, than I believe she felt, at parting with me. I always suspected, from the time of your birth, that my presence pained her.

Soon after my departure, Charlotte's husband, disgusted with her conduct, left her, and went abroad, where he died."

"Have you any reason to think," interrupted Louisa, "that Sir Edward ever received any intimation of the circumstances of my birth? A secret

secret known to so many, is seldom faithfully kept."

"It is impossible to say, Madam," answered Mrs. Dinley, "he was of a very reserved disposition; but certainly, all the while I was in the family, he appeared very fond of you; yet, it used to strike me as singular, that latterly, he never, when he spoke of you, said, "my daughter, or my child;" but always Louisa, or the little girl.

As for me, though I frequently received presents from Lady Roseville, I never saw her, after I had quitted her, 'till I called upon her in Portman-square: but I was true to the confidence she had reposed in me, and kept her secret faithfully."

"Give me leave just to ask," cried Louisa, "how Mr. Bangrove came to know it?"

Mrs. Dinley coloured violently, and stammered in her reply. "I protest I have forgot—I did not intend—but some how or other, he wormed it out of me."

"And Sir Charles Roseville; did not he do the same?" said Mrs. Raby.

"No, Madam;" said Mrs. Dinley, with warmth, glad to prove her innocence in one point, "I have never seen Sir Charles, since I left Lady Roseville's family: however, I know he never scrupled to say, he did not believe Miss Roseville to be his cousin."

"Come, come, Madam," said Doctor Sandolph, "if Sir Charles had these suspicions, are you sure you did not confirm them?"

"No, Sir, never; we were upon such terms, as rarely to converse together—perhaps Doctor Edwards blabbed."

"I wish

" I wish this fatal secret had not been kept so long from me ;" cried Louisa, " but I do not blame you for that ; on the contrary, I think myself obliged to you, for having prevailed upon my mother at last to consent it should be revealed. But pray tell me, what became of Doctor Edwards, and my nurse ?"

" Why, Madam, Doctor Edwards found an opportunity of settling himself to advantage in a town, at a considerable distance from York ; whither he went, to your mother's great joy, when you were about two years of age ; and I understand, that he died a few months since, having during his life, constantly received an annuity from your mother.

As for your nurse, she remained with you till you were sent abroad, after Sir Edward's death ; where she did not attend you, having a large family of children, which she could not conveniently leave. Lady Roseville gave her twenty guineas a year, till she died, about three years since."

Mrs. Dinley ceased to speak ; and Louisa, though she could not esteem her, yet rather pitying the mortification she had endured, and not forgetting the melancholy office she had lately performed, in regard to her mother's remains, presented her, at parting, with a very valuable ring, which had belonged to Lady Roseville ; and Mrs. Dinley received it, with many expressions of respect and gratitude.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOCTOR Sandolph, who perceived how extremely shocked his young friend had been at Mrs. Dinley's odious narration, tried, as she still sat absorbed in thought, to direct her attention to a subject which, he was willing to flatter himself, could not be wholly displeasing to her.

"Suffer me, my dear child," said he, "to remind you, that all your friends have not yet had the happiness of congratulating you, on your recovery. Will you allow me to-morrow, to introduce to you *one*, who has perhaps suffered, during your late illness, still more than yourself?"

A faint blush overspread Louisa's pale cheeks. "Ah! my good friend," said she, "I understand you; but alas! to what purpose should we meet? do you imagine, that if Lord Danefield's noble mind, superior to prejudices, should not think me disgraced by the knowledge of my birth, that I would, poor and humbled as I am, carry ruin into his illustrious family?"

And she arose, with a very disturbed air, and was walking towards the door.

"Hold Louisa," cried Doctor Sandolph, "hold: what do you mean? This discovery, though I am sensible it must be very painful to a mind so delicate as yours, never can be considered as a disgrace, by those who condemn narrow prejudices. The native dignity of your soul raises you above it; and as to your fortune, that is not affected by this circumstance. You have, indeed, diminished it by a few thousands, which your filial
tenderness

tenderneſs thought due to your mother's urgent occaſion for money; and no man, who has a ſpark of virtue in his breaſt, but will conſider the cauſe of that diminution, as an honour to your heart. Lord Daneſfield, I am ſure, will love you the better for it; therefore pray, my dear child, don't worry yourſelf with fantaſtic notions of poverty and diſgrace."

"Why, my dear Sir," ſaid Louiſa, with warmth, "ſurely you do not ſuppoſe that I mean to keep any part of Sir Edward Roſeville's property? God forbid that I ſhould profit by the impoſition practiſed upon him; I refrain from expreſſing all the abhorrence I feel at that, out of reſpect to the memory of the author of it; nor will I diſpute with you, what diſgrace is real, and what imaginary; your well meant ſophiſtry, however, will not convince me, that illegitimate birth is not diſgraceful."

"I muſt interrupt you," cried Doctor Sandolph, "only to enquire whether you ſeriously mean to renounce your eſtate?"

"Moſt aſſuredly—for it does not appear that any ſuſpicions aroſe in Sir Edward Roſeville's breaſt concerning my birth: if he had known of its illegitimacy, it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe he would have wronged his own family, by bequeathing to me, the eſtate in Kent. I feel, therefore, that I have no right to it; and Sir Charles Roſeville ſhall find I am as proud as himſelf; for I will not knowingly, one moment, impoſe myſelf upon the world, as Sir Edward Roſeville's heir; therefore, as ſoon as I come of age, I am reſolved to reſign, not only Cherry-date, to its lawful owner, but likewise all that has accumulated from it. This eſtate not being entailed, nothing can prevent my
doing

doing this act of justice ; and I shall have the satisfaction of shewing Sir Charles, that had it been my fate to have belonged to his family, I should not have been unworthy the name of Roseville."

" God of heaven and earth !" exclaimed Doctor Sandolph, " did any body ever hear such romantic notions of honour and justice ?" So then you mean to beggar yourself, to enrich a man already loaded with wealth ? I really have no patience to hear you talk so. It does not seem to me quite improbable, but that Sir Edward, latterly distrusted the truth ; yet having so long considered you as his child, he actually loved you as such. This he proved by his last cares and solitudes being entirely about you, and so anxious was he, that you should receive the best education possible, that he earnestly recommended, on his death bed, that you should be placed under his mother's protection—And now, forgetful of all this, what are you going to do ? Why, in a fit of haughty disdain (for I can call it by no other name) you renounce his favours, bestow them where 'tis impossible they can be wanted ; and instead of making an amiable man, who adores you, happy, you reject him, and voluntarily embrace poverty."

Louisa saw that her venerable friend was downright angry ; grieved, but not convinced, she replied.

" I acknowledge, my dear Sir, Sir Edward's goodness ; but he believed his favours were conferred on his daughter, for Mrs. Dinley's conjectures of his suspecting the contrary, are very vague indeed, and do not deserve to be set in opposition to his conduct, which was truly parental. The most that can be presumed is, that had he thought me a supposititious child, he would have made some

provision for the wretched being, who was dependant for her existence on his bounty; and this bounty thus bestowed, I would have accepted. But since he died, without this black mystery's being unravelled, it behoves me to do justice to his family. In regard to my beloved benefactress (for I dare not call her grandmother) I do not scruple to avail myself of her generosity, for two reasons—one is, the certainty that Sir Charles Roseville would have received nothing from her; and the other is, because had any young person lived so many years with her as I did, 'tis natural to suppose, she would have given her something. Her legacy will enable me to discharge all that I undertook for my mother; but there still remains for me a large quantity of very valuable jewels; these, perhaps, Sir Charles may choose to purchase; but at all events they must be sold, and I must subsist upon what they produce. Believe me, Sir, poverty will be the misfortune that I shall feel the least," and her eyes filled with tears.

"A fine subsistence, truly!" cried Doctor Sandolph; "but think not, however I may be unable to prevent it, that I shall ever cease to protest against this strange renunciation. As for your engagements with your mother's creditors, I hold them to be sacred; but mark my words, child; I swear you never shall repay me one sixpence; for if I cannot make you retain *all* that is yours, you shall at least keep that poor pittance. Do not attempt to contradict me; for I will not hear a syllable you can say, having already heard too much; and you will go near to break my heart."

And the poor man, clapping his handkerchief over his face, hurried away.

• Louisa

Louisa was touched with tenderness and sorrow to see him thus concerned; but her resolution being founded on principles of equity, remained unshaken.

It was not, however, without suffering a variety of unpleasant emotions, that she began a letter to Sir Charles Roseville, explaining to him the mystery of her birth, and declaring her intention, in the most solemn manner, of renouncing all that she inherited under Sir Edward's will, the moment she came of age; and of yielding it to him, who alone could have a right to it.

As soon as she had dispatched this letter, she found her spirits lighter; but still there remained a cruel trial, which she found it impossible longer to defer.

Her interview with Lord Danesfield, with the man whom she adored, and yet was determined to refuse, required a degree of fortitude, which nothing but the most exalted love, abstracted from all selfish considerations, could give.

The next morning she fixed for this important occasion; but the excessive agitation of her spirits, during the night, rendered sleep a stranger to her eyes; and she arose pale, languid, and hardly able to support herself. She felt, however, that a delay would be useless; and the moment she heard he was arrived, she dragged her feeble form down stairs, and joined him in the drawing room.

Lord Danesfield, who had been extremely miserable at being so long kept from her, and who had no suspicion of his misfortune, advanced eagerly, with sparkling eyes, to catch her in his arms; but she gently eluded his embrace with a stifled sigh, and having thanked him for the part he had taken in her illness, mildly begged him to

be seated, and, without interrupting her, to listen to what she had to say.

This preface naturally alarmed him; and, giving way to the warm impetuosity of love, he said,

"I can listen to nothing, Louisa, 'till you have confirmed the promise you were on the point of making that fatal morning, when we were so cruelly interrupted. First, say, that you will be mine, and then I will hear what you please."

Louisa shook her head, but spoke not.

"Good God!" cried Lord Danefield, "what means this silence? What am I to think? Speak, Louisa, my love; are you unwilling to be mine?"

"My sentiments, Lord Danefield," said Louisa, with a faltering voice; "are unchanged, not so my situation—I am——"

"Oh! stop, I conjure you. I know what you allude to; but can you think, Louisa, that this discovery, which Bangrove has communicated to me, can affect my unbounded love and esteem for you? Now, indeed, I have cause to be offended, that you should think so meanly of me."

"Meanly! my Lord; O no; I believe your soul to be truly noble; and though I am far from thinking that disgraced as I am, I ought to be your wife; yet loving you, as I do, were there no other objections than a flaw in my birth, I would still be yours."

"Objections! What objections can there be?" cried Lord Danefield, vehemently?.

"Poverty, my Lord—You are too equitable to disapprove of my intention of not withholding any part of the Roseville property, from its lawful owner. Poor and destitute then as I shall become, can you imagine I will involve you, dear

Lord

Lord Danefield, that I love so tenderly, in my ruin?"

"Talk not of ruin, noble generous Louisa: yes, I approve of your intention; justice dictates it: but when you have nothing left, come to my arms, to the arms of your faithful Danefield, and bring a treasure, a million of times more valuable than the fortune you forego; a treasure, which nothing can impair, because 'tis inherent in yourself."

Louisa affected, beyond imagination, by the warmth and tenderness with which Lord Danefield spoke; and pleased to find in him such an accordance of principle with her own, laid her hand upon his arm, and pressing it gently, "I believe what you say," cried she, and if your situation were other than it is, I could not withstand your tender pleading. But, my dear Lord, you know the embarrassment of your affairs, and that it would be absolute ruin to you, to marry an indigent wife—I never could bear to be the cause of it; therefore we must submit to our destiny, cruel as it is—An insuperable bar has arisen between us; and, tho' it breaks my heart to say it, dear Lord Danefield, we must meet no more, 'till we can meet with indifference."

"Oh! gracious heaven!" exclaimed Lord Danefield, "do you thus cast me off? Thus deliberately to plunge a dagger into my heart? Cruel, unkind Louisa! but I will cling to your feet, 'till I melt you into pity. Ah! Louisa, my beloved!" and he knelt down before her, bathing his hands with his tears. "Do not thus refine away your happiness as well as mine. Believe me we are formed for each other, and poverty itself will lose its edge, when it attempts to strike mutual love.

Louisa, do not devote to misery the man who lives only for you."

Louisa, dissolved in tears, was unable, for some moments, to reply. Then, with a voice broken with sobs, she said, "'tis you, Lord Danefield, who must shew pity; urge me not on a subject, which tears my heart to pieces. Remember your sister's conduct, on a similar occasion; and shall I shew less fortitude than she did, when she thought it necessary to reject Captain Stanford? Ah! Danefield, my dear Danefield, if you knew what it cost me to refuse you, you would not call me cruel!" and she pressed his hand tenderly between hers, which, however, he hastily withdrew, and rising indignantly,

"I see, Madam," cried he, "that I am indifferent to you, or you would not determine to make me wretched. Ah! Louisa! could I have thought that I was destined to receive this blow from you!"

And he hastily paced the room to and fro, in great disorder.

Louisa, excessively affected, endeavoured, in vain, to pacify him.

"Were there any prospect, my Lord," said she, "of our having a competency, I would still be yours. In regard to myself, Heaven knows, I could live blessed and contented with you in a cottage—But your station in life must be considered. Lord Danefield must not live for himself alone, nor forget what is due to an illustrious family. A blind passion will be no excuse (his superior understanding and education considered) for his plunging into an abyss, whence he never can be extricated. How little should I deserve the esteem you have told me, that Lord Melvern has conceived for me,

me, if, instead of warning you against, I assisted to push you into it ! What must his Lordship think, when instead of an heiress, descended from an ancient family as he believes me to be, he hears that 'tis wretched Louisa, the offspring of guilt, that has, if not seduced you, at least with a culpable weakness, consented to your destruction ? Who can say too, that hereafter when the calm voice of reason shall prevail over that of passion, that you might not yourself, though delicacy may prevent your avowing it, regret our mutual imprudence ?”

Here Lord Danesfield with a gesture of impatience attempted to interrupt her, but she proceeded :

“ Bear with me a little longer,” said she, “ suffer me to represent to you that,—hampered with difficulties ; encumbered with domestic cares ; reduced almost to insignificance by the pressure of want ; obliged to court ministers you may despise, to obtain the precarious favours of a court ;—Thus overwhelmed, your spirit, like that of your noble father, may sink under these misfortunes ; and should your affection for me remain unimpaired, would not that very circumstance render them double severe ? Shall I then not avert these evils, and though I inflict and endure cruel pangs at this instant, are they comparable to those, that may only end with life ?”

She paused ; and Lord Danesfield, who had done himself great violence, to forbear interrupting her, said,

“ If I have had patience, Louisa, to hear you reason with more philosophy than tenderness, it has been, because I expect you will at least have the indulgence to hear me. You have endeavour-

ed to persuade me, that my happiness is your aim. Yet, 'tis *you* who destroy it; and so far from guarding me from misery, 'tis *you*, who are contriving it for me. Believe me, I am neither so mad as to despise fortune, nor yet so romantic as to think we can live upon love. But I think the enthusiasm of that passion very capable of rendering people insensible to the little inconveniences of a scanty fortune. As to what is due to rank, *that* may be dignified by a man's conduct more effectually, than by the parade of wealth. Yet, I do not pretend to say, that I should not frequently regret, that Lady Danefield could not appear with the splendour which formerly used to be an appendage to the name; and some mortification I should feel myself, when instead of the hospitality of my ancestors, I should find myself necessitated to shut my doors against my neighbours and tenants——."

"Noble generous Lord Danefield!" exclaimed Louisa.

Without regarding this interruption, he proceeded. "But what are these trifling evils, compared to those, I should feel deprived of you! the chosen, the beloved of my soul! How can the idea of disgrace and of Louisa, ever associate together? Can you suppose, that after having been flattered with a place in your affections, any consideration should induce me, to give up the hopes of calling you mine? And when no other objection is offered by yourself, than the diminution of your fortune, can *that* be an objection to *me*? You say you could be happy with me in a cottage;—am I less tender, or of a disposition more likely to become fickle, and discontented, than yourself? Granting that all the difficulties you
 presage,

prefage, were to embarrass me ; how could dependency reach that heart, accustomed to be cheered by your smiles ? Formed as you are, my Louisa, to soften every evil, and double every blessing I should enjoy, why resolve to render me wretched now, merely from the vain apprehension, that I should be so hereafter ?

I certainly must have failed greatly in describing Lord Melvern's character, otherwise you could not have a doubt of his sentiments. He is much too noble, not to appreciate properly your conduct to Sir Charles ; and were I capable of shrinking from an object so deserving as yourself, he would very justly condemn the meanness of that heart, whose love ceased to glow, because its mistress ceased to be rich. Gracious God ! but I will suppress my complaints ; and once more have recourse to supplications ; let me then entreat you, Louisa, my beloved, who have so long been the sole end and object of my life, to continue to be so. Let me hope, this was only meant as a trial of my affection ; and cruel as it is, I will forgive it, provided you will instantly promise, that you will be mine."

Louisa was silent, her head rested upon her hand, and a few deep sighs, escaped her tortured breast.

" Louisa, my angel, Louisa !" said Lord Dane-field, pressing her passive hand to his lips, " speak I conjure you ; my life depends upon your answer."

" I cannot speak——my heart is oppressed——leave me, I beg."

" What, before you decide on my fate ? Can you expect it ?"

" Indeed,

" Indeed, Lord Danefield, I am quite ill. Unable to determine at this instant how to act; impressed with admiration at the generosity of your sentiments——but indeed, I must be alone. May the Almighty bless you!"

And quite overpowered by the conflict within her own breast, she disengaged her hand from his, and hurried out of the room. While with vehemence he called after her, to remind her, that his happiness or misery depending upon her decision, he should suffer the most excruciating pain 'till he had obtained it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AS soon as Louisa reached her apartment, she indulged in the friendly relief of tears.—Softened more than ever into tenderness for Lord Danefield; convinced of the elevation of his mind, and of the perfect sympathy that subsisted between them, she suffered for some little time her imagination to be soothed, with the delightful idea of being united to him. The evil she herself had delineated, seemed touched with more strength of colouring, than truth; and as she considered them, insensibly they faded on her eye, so as almost to become imperceptible.

But the fond delirium of the moment passed away, and reason resuming its wonted force, she again viewed objects through their proper medium. Her soul, though exquisitely tender and sensible, was endued with uncommon fortitude, and capable of suffering the greatest torture, rather than swerve in the least from what she thought right. She adored Lord Danefield; but she considered his honour and interest, beyond the indulgence of passion.

“ If,” thought she, “ he would persevere in his fond attachment to me, and prove, by his steadiness, that it is founded on a basis that will not be shaken by any of the casualties of life; and if, by a strict œconomy he should lessen his debts, and may, without absolute ruin to himself, marry the woman he loves; then indeed, I shall think all further resistance needless, and that it is incumbent on me, to make the object of my love happy. Even the harsh unfeeling world, could
no

no longer disapprove of an union, not formed by the rash imprudence of youth, but with the reflection of maturer age. However, Danefield shall not know of this reservation of myself ; he shall be left free to follow the dictates of his heart, uninfluenced by any reference towards me ; and that hereafter, should he renew the offer of his hand, I may owe it solely to love, and not to honour."

Louisa having thus settled this point with herself, and felt all the pleasure arising from the consciousness of having subdued the most soft and bewitching of all passions, and consequently the most dangerous, next considered, that her victory would be very uncertain, if she were exposed to the danger of seeing Lord Danefield, or to the well-meant importunities of their mutual friends ; yet, whither to go she knew not.

While she was musing on these matters, Mrs. Raby came into her apartment ; her eyes appeared as if she had been crying, and she instantly began tenderly to reproach Louisa, for making such a man as Lord Danefield wretched.

"He is gone out of the house," said she, "almost distracted. Ah Louisa ! by what fatal impulse are you governed ? All your actions of late, tend only to make yourself, and those most dear to you, miserable !"

Louisa was trying to vindicate herself, when Bangrove was announced. Mrs. Raby retired, thinking he might have business with her friend ; and the latter was not sorry to see him, being determined to demand his assistance, to accomplish a scheme which she had just conceived.

"Surely,

"Surely, Madam," said Bangrove, (the first compliments being over,) "surely you are the most extraordinary young lady that ever lived!"

"How so, Sir?" said Louisa.

"Why, Madam, I was quite petrified to hear from Sir Charles Roseville, of the step you had taken; however, as most probably you already repent of it, I tell you for your comfort, that your letter binds you to nothing; the law not allowing the rash acts of minors to be valid; and, as I hope, when this romantic fit of generosity is over, you will feel your imprudence, I will engage to set every thing to rights."

"What an opinion you have of me!" cried Louisa, "and what a notion you give of your own sentiments! do you suppose any of your chicanery should tempt me to swerve from my word? no, Sir; in spite of all the law in the world, my renunciation of all claim to Sir Edward Roseville's estate, shall remain firm and unshaken."

"God bless me, Madam; but you are not perhaps apprized, that Sir Charles never could make good any claim to it. Your mother living in Sir Edward's house at the time of your birth, the law will always consider you as his child, nor could his will be set aside: therefore, you need be under no apprehensions; Sir Charles has no more right to this estate than I have."

"I am under no apprehensions;" said Louisa, "nor do I know that Sir Charles would think of contesting this matter with me. But *equity*, and not *law*, is my rule of conduct: however, this is not a subject I wish to enter upon with you; and if you have no particular business with me, I have some with you. Will you do me a favour?"

"A favour!

" A favour ! Good God ! Madam ! why really I know not what to say—to be sure, I am the most unlucky man in the world ; but you take me quite at a nonplus, and at present it would be highly inconvenient to me to sell out. If a small matter indeed——."

" O make yourself easy," interrupted Louisa, " I have no designs upon your purse ; were I in want of money, Mr. Bangrove is not the person I should apply to.

" The service I require of you, is of a very different nature ; I want to find some creditable place, where I may be concealed for a few days, till I can settle myself to my mind. Have you any female acquaintance, who could receive me ?"

Bangrove, much relieved, to find a pecuniary demand was out of the question, but exceedingly amazed at Louisa's request, rose from his chair, and adjusting his ruffles, exclaimed,

" Lord, Madam ! you astonish me more and more every minute ! why should a young lady, like you, wish to be concealed ? I crave pardon ; but really I can see no reason whatever, why you should not continue here till you marry."

" That will not be in a hurry," said Louisa, forcing a smile.

" No ! why I thought—but I suppose Lord Danefield is alarmed at your plan of renunciation. Take my word for it, Madam, you had better drop it."

" That point is already settled," said Louisa, gravely. " Can you, or not, recommend to me such a place as I have described ?"

" Why, Madam, though to be sure Mr. Melcomb is said to be a gay man among the ladies, yet

yet while Mrs. Raby is here, who shall dare to find fault with your living with him?"

"With him!" cried Louisa, "you have a singular style of expression; but to wave that, will you do me the favour I require of you, and give me your word not to discover my retreat."

"To be sure, Madam, if you insist upon it.—I don't know how it is, but I believe no person could refuse any thing you wished; yet, I would fain know your reasons for this extraordinary step."

"Tis not absolutely necessary to give them; but be satisfied, I only wish to be concealed, till my guardian can find a proper retreat for me in the country."

"Well, Madam, I will think about it, and hope, in a few days, or a week——."

"O no, Sir, that will not do; I wish to remove hence to morrow, or the day after, at farthest."

"Very singular; quite incomprehensible to me. Some little disagreement, I presume, between you and Mrs. Raby?"

"Nothing of the sort ever happened."

"Her brother perhaps—aye, I will lay my life I know what has happened."

"You give yourself infinite trouble, to little purpose;" said Louisa, "had I been disposed to assign a reason, I should have done it at first."

"Well, let me see," said Bangrove, ruminating; "what I can do—no, that's not the thing—God bless me—I have it. There is Mrs. Fenwick, a widow lady in Queen-street, a very good woman, who has much confidence in me: you would be quite happy with her. I dare say she would receive you. Shall I go and ask her?"

"By

“ By all means.”

“ O, Madam,” cried Bangrove, “ I had like to have forgotten, that Sir Charles Roseville desires the honour of seeing you ; and wishes you to appoint some hour, to-day or to-morrow, to receive him, because he is going out of town very soon.”

Louisa said, she should be glad to see him that evening at seven o'clock, and desired Bangrove would not delay favouring her with Mrs. Fenwick's answer.

This busy morning being passed, Louisa prepared to attend her friends in the dining parlour, where she had not been since her illness. Her appearance at table made every eye sparkle with delight. Mrs. Raby said every thing that was kind, to cheer her spirits. Melcomb, indeed, spoke little; but Louisa suspected he was not the least pleased of the party. His behaviour, ever since she had left Weymouth, had been more than friendly; and that day, there was a degree of satisfaction in his countenance, and of gallantry in his attentions, which made her suspect he had formed some hopes on her rejection of Lord Danefield, that he had not dared to indulge before.

Doctor Sandolph, who was of the party, amidst his joy on her recovery, could not forbear sometimes shaking his head at her, with a significant glance, which she understood well enough to allude to her conduct, both in regard to Sir Charles Roseville, and Lord Danefield.

The latter she endeavoured to drive from her thoughts, and to assume a composed air, but the task was beyond her strength ; the internal agitation she suffered, appeared on her countenance : and soon after dinner, having taken an opportunity

nity of assuring Melcomb and his sister, how greatly she thought herself obliged to them for all the kindness they had shewn her, secretly meaning it as a farewell compliment, she retired with Doctor Sandolph.

To him she declared her intention of boarding somewhere in the country, as neither her finances, nor her inclination, would permit her to remain in London; and asked if he thought he could prevail upon his sister to receive her at least till she came of age, which would be in about ten months; as it would be comfortable to her, to be under the protection of one of his family.

Doctor Sandolph said, he could not answer for his sister, who though a good woman in the main, was as he had before hinted, rather unamiable in her temper; but if that were not the case, her retired way of life in a remote part of England, must (he presumed) be very disagreeable to a young person: and in his opinion she never could be so eligibly situated as with Mrs. Raby, who he was certain would be delighted with her company; and that Mr. Melcomb had actually desired him to use his influence with her, to prevail upon her to live with them. In regard to money matters, he begged she would give herself no concern about them; for if she persisted in the scheme, which he should ever reprobate, her friends would settle what remained of her fortune, in the best manner they could for her.

Though Louisa could have wished Mrs. Gillingby, (Doctor Sandolph's sister) to have been a woman likely to engage her affections, yet neither her ill temper, nor the remoteness of her situation, nor her retired way of life, deterred her in the least from wishing to bring this scheme to bear.

The

The first objection, she hoped partly to remove by her patience and gentleness ; the others were not considered as such ; they were recommendations to her, who longed for quiet and solitude ; besides too, 'as her principal inducement to quit London was, to avoid an object she could not see without endangering her own fortitude, how could this be accomplished so effectually as in the very situation, he described ? Therefore, she urged him strenuously at least, to sound Mrs. Gillinby on the subject, saying, she had insurmountable objections to live in Mr. Melcomb's house ; and added, that though she would not refuse to remain in Doctor Sandolph's debt, (whom she considered as a father) however distant her chance was, of being enabled to pay him ; yet she must insist upon her friends not attempting further exertions in her favour, as she should feel mortified and disobliged by them. Besides too, she was certain she said, that her jewels would fetch sufficient to maintain her very tolerably, with the interest of the residue of her little fortune ; and that as she should only keep Marianne, her expences after paying her board, (which she should wish to do liberally where ever she fixed) would be very trifling.

Doctor Sandolph had listened to her with evident reluctance ; he seemed extremely averse to her scheme of retirement ; for while she continued in town, he thought Lord Danesfield had a chance of success ; and that young man had entirely won the Doctor's heart. He could indeed have wished, that either one or the other had been somewhat richer ; but it was his earnest desire in Louisa's perplexed situation, to see her established for life ; and where there was so much

much love and virtue on both sides, he thought their union could not be otherwise than happy.

Therefore, he again tried to dissuade her from quitting her friends. But Louisa conjured him not to urge her further ; and now she saw, that the immediate removal she projected, was more than ever to be desired ; as besides Doctor Sandolph's importunities, she must expect to encounter those of her other friends, and perhaps be daily exposed to meet with a pleader still more irresistible.

At length Doctor Sandolph promised to write to his sister, well knowing he said with an air of chagrin, Louisa's inflexibility, which poor Lord Danefield experienced to his cost.

" Ah ! my dear Sir ;" cried Louisa, with her eyes full of tears, " call me not inflexible ; but rather assist in strengthening my resolution to adhere to the dictates of reason, and not to listen to those of passion."

She felt grieved that she durst not communicate to him her intention of secretly quitting the family, being sensible how vehemently he would oppose it : but she thought when the thing was done, it would not be very difficult to make him admit of her excuses.

The good old man's countenance, generally so benignant, was at this time clouded with vexation ; however, she would not let him go, till he had affectionately folded her to his breast, and assured her that he loved her as his child.

He had not long been gone, before Sir Charles Roseville was announced ; he approached her with an air of unusual respect, and after congratulating her on the recovery of her health, he said :

said : " I know not, Madam, what to say in regard to the letter I have had the honour of receiving from you : a mind capable of acting in the manner you have done, would almost construe thanks into an insult. For though you think 'tis no more than justice that you mean to execute, how few, how very few, in the like circumstances, would think themselves obliged to do that !"

Louisa bowed, and Sir Charles continued,

" It was reserved for you, to extirpate prejudices of all kinds from my mind, therefore permit me, while I express my unfeigned admiration of your character, to give you a proof how sensibly I feel your worth ; nor think my proposition too abrupt, for I would not offend your delicacy for the world. It is, to request not only in my own name, but in that of my son's, that you will honour the name of Roseville, by accepting it from him : Cherry-dale then will still belong to you, and I may say your virtue will not be unrewarded, for a better young man does not live than Charles."

Louisa, though extremely surprised at this proposition, did not hesitate in her answer."

" You do me justice, Sir," said she, " in believing that I do not require thanks ; and I own I am flattered, that *you* find me not unworthy of the name of Roseville. Your bearing it, first made me esteem it ; but I must decline the honour you propose. Mr. Roseville (whose merit I do not doubt) and myself, are strangers to each other ; but granting that we might mutually find motives of esteem when we became acquainted, there would still remain an invincible obstacle to our union."

" Name

"Name it, Madam; perhaps it may be less so than you imagine."

"No, Sir; it is fixed here;" laying her hand on her heart, "and there it will ever remain."

"You have then an attachment?"

"I am not ashamed to own it; at the same time I must tell you, that probably I am destined to a single life."

"O impossible—*You* would not have formed an attachment where a return was improbable, or improper; and whoever receives your hand, will be blessed indeed! I wish my son could have been that man; but since that cannot be, we must consult what can be done in regard to Cherry-dale. You have generously, and guided solely by the equity of your own mind, disallowed your claim to it, and acknowledged mine. But, after having so many years thought yourself the lawful owner, I cannot consent to dispossess you on any other condition, than your retaining all that has accumulated from it, since Sir Edward's death; and as I understand the small legacy my aunt left you, is much impaired by your kindness to your mother, let me have the pleasure of presenting you five thousand pounds, as a trifling memorial of the esteem and respect I bear you."

"Pardon me, Sir Charles," cried Louisa, "I cannot consent to receive any gift that might appear like a compensation; and yet I do assure you, there is scarcely any person, to whom I would sooner owe an obligation than yourself, whose character I highly revere."

"And yet you mortify me with refusing all my propositions; let me entreat you——"

"Do not attempt it," interrupted Louisa, earnestly; "I have a spirit ill adapted to support such

such obligations ; they would be quite oppressive, since I never could hope to return them : but in more trifling concerns, I will consent to be obliged to you. You probably would prefer the family jewels, to all others ; they are in my possession ; and the highest price at which they may be estimated by the jewellers, I will accept from you."

" With all my heart," said Sir Charles, " provided you retain the arrears of the estate. Those I positively will never touch."

" You will think better of this, I hope," returned Louisa ; " no donation of mine, I believe, will be valid before next August—but the jewels I wish to part with immediately—Doctor Sandolph shall deliver them to you."

" He and I, said Sir Charles, " will settle that business between us ; and I hope he will prevail upon you, to accede to my wishes as to the rest. Adieu, Madam ; the more I know you, the more I regret I am not to have the happiness of calling you daughter ; yet I must say my son merits an undivided heart. May I have the honour of calling upon you again before I leave town ?"

" I fear, Sir, I shall not be able to see you. I am going, I believe, myself, into the country. However, think of me, Sir Charles, sometimes, as a person who takes a sincere interest in your welfare ; and let Mr. Roseville be assured, that I think highly of him, as well as his father, since at this juncture, when the disgrace of my birth might lower me in the opinion of ordinary minds, you both have shewn the superiority of yours, by honouring me with the most flattering proofs of esteem."

Every

Every word Louisa spoke, raised her in the opinion of Sir Charles ; his eyes even glistened with tears, and with an air of tender respect, he pressed her hand to his lips, and then took his leave.

Louisa, completely fatigued both in body and mind, made an apology to Mrs. Raby for declining all conversation that evening, and early retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EARLY in the morning following, Louisa received a note from Bangrove, to inform her, that his friend Mrs. Fenwick, would with pleasure admit her any time that suited her, in the course of the next day. Louisa, therefore, communicated to Marianne, her intention of secretly departing from Hill-street, and desired she would take an opportunity of conveying to Mrs. Fenwick's, unobserved by Mrs. Raby's servants, a small bundle of linen; the rest of her clothes, her books, and music, she said, might remain in their present situation, 'till she knew where she should finally fix.

Soon after she had made this arrangement, she heard that Lord Danefield was below, and upon her declining to go down on account of business, Mrs. Raby herself came up to entreat she would not persevere in such cruelty. Louisa, in great agitation, conjured her to desist from such distressing importunity, and desired her to tell Lord Danefield, that he should hear from her very shortly; though she would not promise that her letter should communicate the intelligence he might wish.

She had suffered too severely during their last interview, not to be very desirous of avoiding another: when alone, she could (though with many a heavy sigh) reason herself into fortitude; but she was sensible that this, had already been weakened

weakened by Lord Danefield's tenderness, and that to expose it again to his seducing eloquence, would endanger its forsaking her entirely.

Mr. Melcomb little thinking Louisa's departure was so near, went out that day to dinner; and left his sister and her to dine *tête-à-tête*.

Mrs. Raby took this opportunity to press her strongly to give up her scheme of living in the country, and to reside altogether with her and her brother, who had commissioned her to use every argument likely to prevail upon her friend.

"You would really be doing a very meritorious act to continue with us," said Mrs. Raby, "for already I perceive the softness of your manners has had a happy effect on those of Melcomb; he seems no longer desirous of running after Ward and Humpries, or of associating entirely with men; and in a short time, he would find himself pleased with such company as we ourselves could mix with."

Louisa in reply, assumed her that she esteemed Mr. Melcomb sincerely, and loved her as a sister; but that it was absolutely necessary she should pass some time in retirement, when she might have leisure to adapt her mind to her change of situation, and not be liable to conflicts, which would deeply affect her peace.

"But think, my dear Louisa," cried Mrs. Raby, "what your feelings will be amidst strangers; not one sympathizing heart near you! Who shall then watch over you, and prevent your brooding over grief? And though you may feel perhaps less than most people would, the renunciation you have made of fortune, yet that of the first, and dearest inclination of your heart; ah! believe me, Louisa, you will long feel that! Your

spirits at present are exalted to an enthusiastic pitch; and if it were the fashion now, as in ancient times, to strive for the glory of martyrdom, I dare say you would be one of the first to burn, to shew your zeal. But in these days, when people content themselves with attaining milder virtues, why should you aim at more? Your intention of giving up an estate, that is legally yours, in my opinion is most unnecessary SELF-DENIAL; but *outrè* as that action is, 'tis nothing compared to your cruel rejection of the most amiable man in the world. By this, you at once destroy your own, and his happiness; you will go and pine in some desert, and he will wander about the world forlorn and miserable."

"I see, my dear Emily," returned Louisa, "that you wish to persuade me that you suspect pride, and ostentation of self-denial, to be the secret motives that actuate me. I will not complain of your injustice, because I know you disguise your real sentiments. Anxious for my happiness, warmly attached to your relation, and desirous of keeping me with you, you would fain persuade me that my union with him would promote our mutual felicity. But there you are mistaken. 'Tis true, that at first we should probably be so happy to have overcome all obstacles, and to know that nothing could separate us; that we should set prudence at defiance. But be assured that as our attachment would, perhaps, become still more tender, we should more poignantly feel the inconveniences we had drawn upon each other. 'Tis not in real life as in romance, where love is supposed to supply for every other deficiency. Could we view the interior of one of those *ménages* formed on the plan of bread and cheese in a cottage,

cottage, I suspect we should frequently find more discontent than love; and assuredly scenes of distress, sufficient to deter the most romantic disposition from plunging into them. A man so very young as Lord Danefield, of a profession too that requires a full flow of spirits, would be lost to himself and society, at his first entrance into life——Unable to appear in the world in the style suitable to his birth, he would sink with the unhappy object whose fatal tenderness had been his bane, into obscurity. All his noble ambition damped, he must be content to vegetate; if however the galling pressure of distressed circumstances, would permit his falling into such a torpid state. No, Emily; my ideas of love are very different. A passion which seeks only temporary gratifications, is not *that* I feel for Lord Danefield. Yet, think me not insensible, ah! no; (wiping away a starting tear) my heart feels for him, more than language can express. Nor take it amiss, my dear Emily, that I refuse the generous asylum, which you, and Mr. Melcomb offer me. The tumult of London would be insupportable to me at present."

"Your notions," said Mrs. Raby, "may be very just, but I believe few people who are in love, are disposed to reason thus. If you would continue with me, you should pass as much of your time in retirement as you chose; I would exactly do what you wished in every respect; and I am much mistaken," continued she with an arch smile, "if you could not mould Melcomb's heart and soul, as you pleased."

"Ah Emily!" cried Louisa, "you are very impolitic; for the bare suspicion of what you insinuate, had I no other objection, would suffice,

to determine me not to continue Melcomb's guest : for if I cannot marry Lord Danefield, I never will any other man."

The two friends then separated, and neither of them in the course of the evening, seemed disposed to renew the subjects they had already discussed.

Louisa's mind full of her intended removal, and pained, thus clandestinely to quit her amiable friend, was too much agitated to permit her to sleep. She arose early, as she wished to write to Mrs. Raby, and Doctor Sandolph ; the former, she entreated to pardon her abrupt departure, explaining her motive to be a strong desire to remove out of Lord Danefield's knowledge ; and after making her acknowledgments to him and Melcomb for their kindness to her, she concluded, with promising to write to them as soon as she had settled in the country ; and enclosed a few lines for Lord Danefield, expressive of unalterable esteem, and hearty wishes for his health and happiness ; but at the same time she besought him not to be offended at her resolution, of persisting in those sentiments she had declared to him, at their last interview ; and she added, that for their mutual peace of mind, it was necessary they should meet no more.

Doctor

Doctor Sandolph, she addressed as follows :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

SENSIBLE of my own weakness, and that I am far from possessing that inflexibility of temper which you suppose, I have judged it prudent to withdraw myself from my friends. My place of retirement is such, I hope, as you yourself could not disapprove, and I shall remain in it no longer than 'till you have received Mrs. Gillinsby's answer : if she is kindly disposed to receive me, I shall hasten to her, but not without seeing the friend in the world whom I respect the most. If you will be so good to communicate Mrs. Gillinsby's answer to Mr. Bangrove, he will inform me of it.

Pardon, my dear Sir, whatever may appear irregular in my conduct ; and be assured it has only been influenced by the dread, almost amounting to certainty, of being exposed to fresh trials, that perhaps might have rendered it impossible for me to persevere in a refusal, which, however justified by reason, costs me more than you can imagine, or I express.

Add not to my other vexations, your displeasure ; *that* would totally overcome me. Consider me as a helpless orphan, whose only comfort on earth is your paternal love and protection. To deserve these throughout life, will be the constant study of

Dear Sir,

Your grateful, and obliged child,

LOUISA.

These

These letters she committed to Marianne's care, charging her not to have them delivered, 'till she had been gone some hours ; and after recommending her to remain in Hill-street, seemingly ignorant whither she was gone, she told her to order a chair to be got immediately, that she might slip out, before Mrs. Raby was up. This was accordingly done ; and though the servants seemed rather surprized at her going out thus early, they concluded, that it was occasioned by some pressing business, relative to her deceased mother, especially as they heard her order the chairman to go to Holborn-hill ;—but she had not proceeded far, before she directed them to Lincoln's Inn, where she dismissed them : and meeting Bangrove, who was on the watch for her, she desired him to conduct her to his friend's house. The chairmen, after asking if they should call any where to carry her home, being answered in the negative, retired ; and Bangrove lending her his arm (for she could scarcely support herself) they walked till they came to a stand of coaches, one of which conveyed them to Mrs. Fenwick's.

During the way he told Louisa, how much Sir Charles Roseville admired her behaviour ; at the same time that he lamented her rejection of his son.

“ You don't know, Madam, what you refuse,” added he ; “ Mr. Roseville is a very good young gentleman, and he will have a most noble fortune. Indeed it was always the match I had in my eye for you ; but you flung cold water upon it ; and there was a time when Sir Charles was equally averse to it : but now he and his son are willing, and it would be just the thing to settle affairs hand-

handsomely between you ; therefore I wish you would consent to it, otherwise you may live to repent having been so extremely fastidious."

Louisa begged he would have no uneasiness upon her account, as the single state was what she preferred.

" Lord, Madam ! I thought you had been a lady of more veracity ; can you suppose me such a fool as to believe you ? What, out of mere perverseness, when so many people are dying for you, you resolve to disappoint them all—No, no ; you are too pretty to remain single."

Their arrival at Mrs. Fenwick's put an end to this conversation. Bangrove presented Louisa to his friend, strongly recommending to her, that she might be allowed all the privacy she desired ; and then he hurried away to Westminster Hall.

Mrs. Fenwick was a jolly looking woman ; vulgar to excess, yet fancying herself extremely polite ; apparently good humoured, and exceedingly talkative.

On the stairs she screamed out to her maid Martha, to bring breakfast.

" Dear me, Ma'am," said she, " I am quite discomposed that such a lady as you, should find me without a man servant ; but indeed, I was forced to part with John ; for you know, Ma'am, nothing is so shocking to a person of delicacy, as vulgar manners, and I never could teach John, what it was to be genteel."

Mrs. Fenwick then bustled about, to get her tea equipage in order ; and after waiting a considerable time, they sat down to breakfast. Louisa had little appetite to eat, and was not at all inclined to comply with Mrs. Fenwick's teasing entreaties, to taste a bit of every thing upon the

table. She wished much to escape to the chamber allotted to her ; but Mrs. Fenwick was so delighted to have a person to talk to, who never attempted to interrupt her, that she would not part with her, saying, she was very sure it would be melancholy for her to be alone ; and that she would, with all the pleasure in the world, keep her company.

Louisa, after thanking her for her good will, declined giving her so much trouble ; and begged she would not take it amiss, if she passed the chief part of her time in her chamber, as she was in a very indifferent state of health ; and, she earnestly desired that no person whatever might see her, or hear of her being at her house.

“ Very well, Ma’am, you may depend upon my secrecy,” said Mrs. Fenwick ; “ I am very close, and defy any body to get any thing out of me.”

Mrs. Fenwick now shewed Louisa her chamber : she would have been better pleased had it not looked upon the street, and if the windows had not been so low ; however, in such an obscure part of the town, she hoped she might escape observation.

The morning did not pass as quietly as she could have wished ; Mrs. Fenwick, or her maid, fidgetted backwards and forwards into her apartment, out of their abundant civility, always imagining she wanted something.

Mrs. Fenwick had prepared a very plentiful dinner, and was half affronted that Louisa did so little honour to it : in vain she assured her, that she was but just recovering from a severe fit of illness ; and that one simple thing was all she durst touch. Mrs. Fenwick kept lamenting, that she

she had not been able to please her taste; and asked her a thousand questions as to what food she preferred. In the evening, that she might not be obliged either to listen to Mrs. Fenwick, or to talk herself, she proposed playing at backgammon, and early retired to rest.

The next morning after breakfast, as Louisa went to her window to let down the curtain, the sun being troublesome, the first object that struck her eye, was Lord Pompouston, in earnest conversation with a coach-maker over the way, but with his eyes fixed on Mrs. Fenwick's house.—After all she had suffered from this man, 'tis not surprizing that she suspected he had discovered her retreat, and perhaps was machinating to get her again into his power.

Though she had already cautioned Mrs. Fenwick, not to admit a creature that might ask for her, she judged it proper to lecture her afresh; but upon enquiry, she found she was gone out; and when she returned to her chamber, and peeped behind the curtain to see what was become of her persecutor, he was no longer to be seen.

But still she could not help being uneasy. Presently after she heard a double rap at the door, and flying to the stairs to listen, she was somewhat re-assured, at only hearing Mrs. Fenwick's voice. Louisa instantly went down to renew her caution, and met Mrs. Fenwick coming to her. She seemed in a hurry to communicate something; and Louisa, whose thoughts ran entirely upon Lord Pompouston, turned pale, and trembled, concluding it was about him.

“ Well, Ma'am, now you shall see, whether I am not a fit person to be trusted;” cried she,
 “ but

“ but sit down. La ! I am so out of breath, I shall not be able to speak this hour—but you shall hear all about it.”

“ About what, Madam ?” cried Louisa, all impatience.

“ You shall hear—you must know, Ma’am, that my cousin Warner, who is lying-in (poor soul ! she had a sad time) wished to see me ; and so I thought I would treat Chloe with a walk ; dogs in London, do nothing but eat and sleep, and get so fat, they can hardly waddle along ; and so as I passed by Miss Tiffing’s door, I thought I would just step in to rest Chloe, and then go on to my cousin Warner ; I believe I might sit about half an hour with Miss Tiffing, and—.”

“ Well, madam,” interrupted Louisa, who apprehended this story was endless ; “ but what did you hear, in which I am interested ?”

“ I shall come to that part presently. Well, I went and paid my visit to my poor cousin ; she has been ill managed, I fear.”

“ I am sorry for it,” cried Louisa ; “ but I am in such a flurry, I wish you would come at once to the point in question.”

“ So, after staying a reasonable time with my cousin, I returned home ; and just as I got to my own door, and went to knock, bounce runs I against a gentleman ; he drew back, and began apologizing, and so I courtesied ; and so he said, with a smile, “ may I take the liberty,” says he, “ of asking, if you have not got a young lady with you ?”

Louisa started ; and Mrs. Fenwick, without observing it, continued.

“ A young lady, Sir !” says I, and I smiled, and so you are to come to pump me, are you ? but believe

believe me you have met with your match; you will get nothing out of me, I promise you, says I."

"That I perceive, madam," says he; "but you would oblige me very much, if you would give your friend, Miss Roseville, this letter."—And he held one in his hand. "No, that I won't, says I; and then I protested I knew of no such person, and that I thought it very unhand-some of him to skulk about people's houses, and the door being opened, I shut it in his face."

"Is this gentleman very tall?" asked Louisa, not quite so well satisfied with Mrs. Fenwick's prudence, as she was herself.

"No, not very tall, but a very comely gentleman."

"Are his eyes round and black?"

"Lord bless me, I can't say what colour his eyes are. I suppose he is some sweetheart of yours; and now I'll lay my life, you are sorry I did not take his letter."

Louisa assured her of the contrary, and re-iterated her request, that she would deny her to every body.

Prepossessed that this comely gentleman could be no other than Lord Pompouston, she began to repent having thrown herself out of her friend's protection. This step now, seemed to her rash and unnecessary, as she might have confined herself to her chamber, for the little while she had probably to remain with Mrs. Raby, and thus have avoided Lord Danefield, though not her friend's importunities.

If it had not been for the fear of appearing capricious, she would perhaps have returned to Hill-street;

Hill-street ; however, she considered, that since the thing was done, and with a good motive, it was better now to remain quiet in her present situation 'till Mrs. Gillinsby's answer came, which must be in a few days. But the detested image of Lord Pompouston haunted her all the night ; at last, towards morning, exhausted for want of sleep, her eyes insensibly closed, and she did not wake 'till summoned to breakfast.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LOUISA found Mrs. Fenwick waiting breakfast for her, but too good humoured to mind it.

"It does not signify of a rush, ma'am," said she, when Louisa began to apologize, "for indeed, I have been engaged 'till this very instant."

Louisa satisfied, quietly began her breakfast.

"And so, ma'am," said Mrs. Fenwick with a simper, "you can't guess, I warrant, with whom I have been engaged?"

Louisa said that was quite impossible, not having the honour of knowing any of her acquaintance, except Mr. Bangrove.

"La! it was not he; but though I promised you should see nobody, I did not think myself obliged to refuse seeing a very civil gentleman, who asked for me, so I e'en let him in."

"Who, madam, who?" cried Louisa, in great alarm.

"Why, he would not tell me his name, but said as how he was satisfied, that you was safe and well. A mighty pretty man, indeed!"

"And so, madam, you told him I was here."

Mrs. Fenwick coloured, "No indeed; I only said, why look you, Sir; you lose your pains, for the young lady with me (mind I did not name you) will not see a creature. She sits moping by herself all day long. I fancy she has lost some dear friend, for she is in deep mourning; but I asked no questions, for I know that would not be proper. The gentleman commended my extraordinary discretion, and departed."

Louisa

Louisa did not think this simple enquiry after her health, could proceed from Lord Pompoufton, unless it was meant to fatisfy himfelf that it was actually her, he had perhaps had a glympfe of her from the window; and this might only be a prelude to more active meafures from his Lordship.

But after catechizing Mrs. Fenwick very carefully, fhe learned that it was the fame perfon who had offered to give her a letter, and fhe could not trace the leaft refemblance between the description given of him, and Lord Pompoufton.

This fomewhat tranquillized her fpirits, and that day and the next, paffing without any alarm, fhe flattered herfelf fhe had efaped the attention of her old tormentor.

Bangrove called upon her in the evening. He told her, that Doctor Sandolph had been with him, to enquire where fhe was, but that he had faithfully kept her fecret; "Melcomb," added he, "afks no questions, but he feems ftrangely out of fpirits, and his fifter is quite wretched about you."

"Dear Emily!" exclaimed Louisa, with a figh.
 "I have other news to tell you," faid Bangrove.
 "Lord Pompoufton is in town; he called upon me this morning, a thing he never did in his life before; and he enquired very particularly after you, and faid he had juft an accidental glympfe of a perfon very like you, at a window in this ftreet; but, added his lordship, "I knew it could not be Mifs Roseville, as nothing could be lefs probable, than her being in that part of the town; and befides the perfon I faw, was very pale and thin;" and then he wanted to know where you lived. Upon which I told him, you were gone into

into the country, and so the matter dropped : for I hate that bragging lord, and wished to discourage his pursuit."

Louisa rejoiced that Bangrove had been so discreet ; and now she was quite at a loss to account for the apparition of the strange gentleman at Mrs. Fenwick's ; but she did not suspect it could be Lord Danefield, because she thought that lady would in her description of him, have chosen a different epithet than *comely*.

Bangrove imagined it might be Melcomb ; nor was he in the wrong. One of the chairmen, who had carried her from Hill-street, had, unobserved by her, or Bangrove, watched her at a distance, merely from an impulse of curiosity ; he had taken the number of the coach which had carried her to Mrs. Fenwick's : and afterwards, when all the family in Hill-street were in sad confusion, upon finding she was gone, and enquiries were made of him, whither he had carried her ; he made his report to Mr. Melcomb, who rewarded him for it, and employed him to learn further from the hackney coachman. By this means, Mr. Melcomb had been enabled to trace her to Mrs. Fenwick's, and to ask those questions, which had so much alarmed and perplexed Louisa.

However, after having attempted unsuccessfully to convey a letter to her, he would not presume to intrude into her presence ; and doubting of his sister's having equal forbearance, he concealed this circumstance from her.

As for Lord Danefield, he was so deeply affected by the contents of Louisa's letter, and at having thus suddenly lost her, that he fell ill of a nervous fever, with which he was confined to his house : and Melcomb, in answer to his repeated enquiries

enquires after her, said she was gone into the country, but that he knew not whither. For Lord Danefield was not in a condition to go out, even if Louisa would see him, which to Melcomb appeared very doubtful.

The rest of the time she passed at Mrs. Fenwick's, nothing material happened. Doctor Sandolph, as soon as he had obtained an answer from his sister, conformable to his ward's wishes, sent the following note to her by Bangrove.

To Miss ROSEVILLE.

" I little imagined, my dear child, would have secreted herself from me, and though I know she means every thing that is right, she must excuse an old man's telling her, she has done wrong.

A young lady's actions should be clear as the sun, and not liable to any misconstruction; yet such, my dear Louisa, might be put upon your strange disappearance from amongst such friends as you incautiously left. But I do not mean to distress you, therefore I shall only say, that we have as much as possible guarded against this, by not letting people know the real truth.

You are thought to be already gone in the country: thither I am ready to attend you, when ever you please. My sister will be happy to receive you: yet I own, 'tis not the situation I could exactly have wished for my dear child. Mrs. Gillinsby has many peculiarities, and will be (I fear) no very pleasant companion. However, she is a woman of unblemished character, and respected in the neighbourhood where she lives.

I insist

I insist upon settling you with her myself, nor shall I allow you to enquire about such paltry concerns as your board, &c.

Your compliance with this command of your guardian, for such I will call it, is the only condition on which I will be reconciled to you for the past. My eyes grow dim, my pen does not glide along as it did formerly, but my heart retains its wonted warmth, and ceases not to recommend you to the protection of the Almighty!

R. SANDOLPH."

Bond-street, November 2, 178—

Louisa felt hurt at her venerable friend's reprimand, and the more so, as she was sensible she deserved it. But she still retained her opinion, that to fly from the object most dear to her, was the only method of obtaining a compleat victory over herself. And as distance would be a slight obstacle to Lord Danefield, she determined neither to let him, nor even Mrs. Raby, whose influence with her, was little inferior to his Lordship's, be acquainted with the place of her residence.

Therefore in a few lines, she wrote to Doctor Sandolph, after candidly acknowledging her error in concealing herself from him; and tenderly pleading for pardon, she strongly recommended to him, not at least for some time, to suffer her friends to know whither she was going, and she fixed on an early day for her journey, thankfully accepting of the terms he had proposed.

Marianne had, by Louisa's orders, joined her some days before; and the latter desired the favour of Bangrove to forward her baggage (which had already been conveyed to his house) into Yorkshire.

Her

Her next care, was to purchase an elegant present for Mrs. Fenwick ; who, though above receiving any pecuniary return for her civilities, was not a little delighted with Louisa's gift.

Early on the day appointed, Bangrove attended Doctor Sandolph to his friend's house ; the good old man forgot his displeasure at sight of his beloved child, as he liked to call her ; and every thing being ready, Louisa took leave of Mrs. Fenwick, and Bangrove, (to the great regret of the former, who was become quite fond of her) and with the Doctor and Marianne, set out in a chaise for Yorkshire.

It was the beginning of November ; the weather was dark and gloomy, and extremely cold. Much as Louisa had wished for this moment, now that it was arrived, and that she was turning her back on every thing most dear to her ; going amidst strangers, where by all accounts she should meet with little either to delight or amuse her ; her spirits sunk, and she sat silent with her eyes fixed upon objects without seeing them, and apparently listening to Doctor Sandolph, without understanding a word he said. Not one chearful idea could find entrance in her breast ; all there was sad. If she revolved the strange events which had happened in the course of a few months, she could scarcely believe herself awake, and not suffering under the illusion of a troublesome dream. It was but nine months, since she arrived in England ; not indeed happy, for she had recently lost a valuable friend ; but with a very fair prospect of entering into the world, with all those advantages that a young woman could derive from education, birth, and fortune ; the latter not sufficiently splendid, to allure the needy adventurer, but suf-

ficiently

ficiently ample, to enable her to please herself, in the choice of a partner for life. Love too, after some little difficulties, had promised her every felicity that can arise from the union of two minds, equally tender and refined.

But now, partly by the strict equity and delicacy of her sentiments, and partly by the turpitude of others, she found herself with an ambiguous name and place in society, with a very slender fortune; and under the cruel necessity of flying from the object of her tenderest affection.

As it was not convenient to Doctor Sandolph, (who was still very weak, and unable to bear fatigue) to travel far the first day, he and Louisa, agreed to stop at Hatfield. When they arrived there, their carriage was prevented from drawing up to the inn door by another, which had preceded theirs, from which some ladies alighted. These ladies, who had more curiosity than Louisa, loitered in the entry to see who followed them, and one of the strangers exclaiming, "O la! if it is not Miss Roseville!" ran up to her, who immediately recognized Miss Bensley. Lady Bridget Wilford stood at a little distance, and contented herself with making a formal courtesy, and not being in a humour for trifling chit chat, she beckoned Miss Bensley with a frown, to come with her; but that young lady, though she had no great affection for Louisa, longed to have a third person to relieve her from the *ennui* she had experienced, during a journey of some length, *tête-à-tête* with her aunt, and therefore proposed that they should all spend the evening together.

Lady Bridget gave a cold assent; Louisa excused herself on account of indisposition; but Doctor Sandolph, who thought company might be of service

service to dissipate her melancholy; and who himself delighted in society, being a great enemy to silence and solitude, pressed her to comply with the ladies imitation; and unwilling to refuse him, she reluctantly consented.

Dinner being ordered, the ladies while it was preparing, and Doctor Sandolph, conversed on general topics; but Louisa could scarcely prevail upon herself to speak, and soon after they had dined, under pretence of giving an order to Marianne, she stole to her own chamber, much to Miss Bensley's satisfaction, who had great curiosity to learn, as well as her aunt, (though the latter did not deign to shew it) the truth of the reports which had circulated concerning her mother's death, and the discovery she had made just before that event; some circumstances relative to it, had been hinted in the papers, and Doctor Sandolph's communicative disposition, gave them hopes of gaining more compleat information.

However, as Lady Bridget knew, that nothing encourages people to speak out so readily, as to appear perfectly acquainted with those matters of which in fact they are ignorant, she began first to lament with feigned concern, her friend Lady Roseville's death; observing however, that she must needs say she had been very imprudent, and got herself into sad scrapes, entirely owing to her not attending to the good advice which she had frequently given her. "And I find," continued she, "that Louisa, after all, is no heiress, but a base born child, and her father a Frenchman, the late Sir Edward Roseville's own servant."

Doctor Sandolph not a little vexed, said in reply, that her ladyship had heard a great deal more
than

than the truth, though he acknowledged Louisa did not owe her birth to Sir Edward; but he waved entering into particulars.

"Well, Sir; if I have been misinformed," said Lady Bridget, "in regard to the rank of Louisa's father, I certainly have not in another circumstance. For I know from the best authority, that Sir Charles Roseville, is actually going to dispute your ward's right to the family estate; this I believe you will not pretend to deny."

Doctor Sandolph smiled, but not with his usual benignity. "Sir Charles Roseville," said he coldly, "has no occasion to litigate an estate which (though he never could make good any claim to it) Louisa has voluntarily relinquished to him; and I believe he has at this moment no other regret, than that she has refused the offer of his son's hand, as well as of a considerable sum, which he wishes her to accept."

"Lord bless me, is it possible?" exclaimed Miss Bensley; and turning to Lady Bridget, "only think madam, how excessively absurd!"

"'Tis scarcely credible," returned Lady Bridget, "poor thing! in her situation, what can she possibly expect? For my part I think it was very noble indeed, of Sir Charles, to make her such an offer."

"And do you see nothing noble in her conduct?" cried Doctor Sandolph, warmly.

"Umph, she did no more than her duty," said Lady Bridget, "for what right had she to the estate."

"Right!" cried Doctor Sandolph, losing all patience, "'tis very easy to sport fine sentiments," but 'tis not every one, who, like my Louisa, has
that

that rectitude of principle necessary to practise them; especially when they clash with their own interest."

"Well, I still think there was nothing extraordinary in her action; and that under such disadvantages of birth as she is, she ought to have caught at almost any offer, and thought herself not a little fortunate, that people would be so good to overlook them."

"As for that," cried Doctor Sandolph, angrily, "no person of a liberal mind would dwell upon a blemish effaced by such worth, as Louisa possesses; beauty, talents and understanding are all her own; and these are dignified by the most delicate sense of honour and generosity. But to prove to your ladyship, that this testimony to her merit is supported by better authority, than that of an old doating man, I give you my word, two men, one of them of distinguished rank, and the other a gentleman of good fortune, have since this discovery of her birth, been more attached to her than before; but neither of them are likely to succeed."

Lady Bridget and her niece both lifted up their eyes, not only with a look of astonishment, but of mortification; and Louisa's return put an end to the conversation. The supper was no sooner over, than the company, who had been very cold and ceremonious together, separated; some of them without regretting, that they should meet no more.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DOCTOR Sandolph had faithfully kept Louisa's secret, in regard to the place of her future abode. Lady Bridget naturally concluded, he was carrying her to Stretly; and he and Louisa were on their route the next morning, long before she was stirring.

They continued to travel leisurely, and finished their journey without any accident. The approach to Mrs. Gillinsby's house, was not such as to exhilarate Louisa's spirits. Which ever way she turned her eyes, she saw nothing but a flat dingy heath; the uniformity of which, was only broken by black coal machines, and iron works emitting volumes of thick sulphurous smoke. Heath-hall (the name of Mrs. Gillinsby's abode) was about a quarter of a mile from a dirty village. The house appeared old and comfortless, almost covered with ivy and liverwort; confined by a high wall, and standing in the midst of a very small garden, which in this advanced season, seemed particularly desolate and forlorn. No trees, no lawns, no clear rivulets, to rejoice the eye. At this dismal scene poor Louisa's spirits were only supported by the faint hope, that the interior of this dwelling, might not correspond with its exterior.

A tall gawky footboy, with black hair bristling up from his forehead, and eyes wildly rolling, as if scared by the sight of company, appeared at the iron gate fronting the door, and conducted the travellers over a swampy gravel walk, to the house. Here a large irregular hall, cold and gloomy, gave

no favourable preface of the other apartments. The staircase of old oak, was so well rubbed, that it would have been very slippery, if age had not indented the steps. At the head of these, Mrs. Gillinsby appeared, and civilly, but coldly, gave them welcome.

There was nothing prepossessing in her appearance; she was very tall and stiff; her countenance totally unlike her brother's; altogether as severe and forbidding, as his was chearful and benign; she seemed, however, in her way, glad to see him, and said (though this civility seemed rather an effort) that she was well pleased to have such a companion as Miss Roseville.

After the first compliments were over, Mrs. Gillinsby conducted her to her apartment. It was very large, had no less than five rattling casements, a very small fire place, no carpet, and a floor, that seemed, for the last century, to have been the *piece de resistance* to the family rats, for every part of it bore marks of their depredations. A thin callico bed and curtains, without any window shutters, completed the comforts of this chamber. Within, was a large light closet, with a press bed for Marianne.

Louisa shivering by herself, had time to make these observations, while Doctor Sandolph and his sister settled the terms of her board. At supper, they requested the favour of her company; and Louisa, out of regard to her old friend, strove to assume an air of satisfaction, very foreign from her real feelings; but at night, retired in her comfortless apartment, she gave vent to her tears: she felt, however, she had no right to repine; as, whatever *desagremens* she found in her new place of dwelling, she had been forewarned of; and after maturely

turely weighing these, with the consequences of continuing with her friends, had decided, that they could not be so intolerable, as incessant conflicts with herself. Yet, if she could have remained unknown at Mrs. Fenwick's, she thought she might easier have accommodated herself to her disposition, the defects of which were palliated by chearful good humour, than to what she fancied to be Mrs. Gillinsby's. But even here, she had at least one comfort; for Marianne, unlike the generality of servants, who are apt to find more difficulties than their superiors, not only forbore murmuring, but affected to appear pleased that the apartment was so convenient; and added, that if a carpet could be got, and a few shelves put up, it would be quite the thing.

The next morning Doctor Sandolph took an opportunity of speaking apart with Louisa. "What can you do, my dear child?" cried he; "I am sure you never will be able to bear this place. Speak honestly, I conjure you; and, though I know not of any other residence I can recommend, you shall not continue here, if you are averse to it."

However dissatisfied Louisa was, her spirits were so much dejected, that it scarcely seemed material to her, in what place she settled. It had, often occurred to her, that the convent where she had been educated, would be infinitely pleasanter than Mrs. Gillinsby's house; but a secret reluctance to quit the kingdom where Lord Danesfield resided, though she might never see him, determined her to appear contented, especially as the summer following, her minority would end, and then she might suit herself with an habitation more to her taste.

Doctor Sandolph was glad to find she could accommodate herself to her situation; he told her, that her jewels had been valued, and that Sir Charles had taken them for four thousand pounds, which he had already paid, and that he had placed this sum so advantageously, as to secure her five per cent for it.

Louisa, though she knew the jewels were valuable, had not expected they would have produced so much; and was desirous of enquiring a little further into this matter; but the Doctor coolly said, he had told her no more than the truth; and that Bangrove had compromised so well with Lady Roseville's creditors, that after paying every body, there would remain five hundred pounds of Louisa's fortune, besides the trifle she had promised to accept from him; so that altogether, she would have six thousand five hundred pounds; for the former she would receive interest: but the last mentioned sum (a bank bill of a hundred pounds excepted, which he then gave her) he said, he had placed at his banker's, whence she might draw it out, as she had occasion.

Louisa could not help suspecting that her affairs being in a condition so much beyond her expectations, was owing to the generosity of Doctor Sandolph, or some other of her friends, and she shewed some uneasiness upon this head, but she could get nothing from Dr. Sandolph; and finding this business was entirely settled, she became full as content with her present fortune, as she had been with her former. After affectionately thanking her good friend for the trouble he had taken in settling her affairs, she gave him a commission to purchase a few things necessary to make her chamber habitable.

The

The following morning, Doctor Sandolph departed ; and Louisa was as much affected at the loss of his company, as she could be, with a frame of mind, of late inured to vexation. She wrote by him to Mrs. Raby, and desired her always to enclose her answers to Doctor Sandolph, for she would not trust her with the name of her abode.

Louisa now set herself to study Mrs. Gillinsby's humour, that she might, if possible, conciliate her affection. But Mrs. Gillinsby, cold and reserved, was impenetrable to all her advances ; and though not very old, (being fifteen years younger than her brother) seemed to have outlived all chearfulness. Her conversation was chiefly confined to monosyllables ; but whether from the lack of ideas, or from moroseness of disposition, was not easy to be discovered. She was tiresomely precise ; scrupulously exact in the exterior duties of religion, without having the least conception of their meaning ; a professed enemy to cards, music, and public places ; and averse to all books, except the bible, and some old sermons ; those of the present age, being, in her opinion, light and flimsy things. Needlework seemed her only amusement : and she early conceived a distaste for Louisa, because she appeared to take no delight in it.

The winter was already set in, and so severely, that Louisa could seldom walk ; nor was the heath so very tempting even in fine days, as to induce her to stroll far from the house. She endeavoured, however, to establish herself comfortably within ; she arranged her books, carpeted her floor, and enlarged her fire place ; though she had reason to think Mrs. Gillinsby was not particularly pleased with
the

the last named alteration. All the morning, when she did not walk, she remained in her own chamber, occupied with her pen, her brooks, and her pencil; music she was obliged to give up, out of complaisance to Mrs. Gillinsby, who could hear her play in the room where she usually sat, and complained that it interrupted her serious studies. But as the spirits soon flag without some pursuit, Louisa determined to try her skill in modelling; shortly her ingenuity produced many beautiful figures; first in wax, and afterwards in plaister of Paris.

Sculpture she did not attempt; not only because of the difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility of executing works of this sort, without any apparatus too cumbersome for a chamber; but likewise, because she believed (and most assuredly she was right) that it was given to *one* lady alone, to attain excellence in so difficult an art. The same elegant hand which produces to an admiring world busts and figures, that a Praxiteles might have avowed, would with equal facility excel in any thing she attempted; for Louisa knew that this amiable *person*, was the favourite child of Genius.

Louisa frequently heard from Doctor Sandolph, and through him from Mrs. Raby; the latter, when their separation was recent, expressed a little resentment at her friend's conduct; but as Louisa wrote to her constantly, and in the kindest manner, this soon subsided.

The account Mrs. Raby at first gave of Lord Danefield, was such as added to Louisa's dejection; from her she learned how ill he had been, and how slowly he recovered. Afterwards Mrs. Raby informed her, that as soon as he came of age,

age, he had insisted upon appropriating his whole revenue, all but five hundred per annum, to the discharge of his debts ; and that with Lord Melvern's assistance he had settled his affairs in such a manner, that he thought, in ten years, his estate would be perfectly clear. He rather wished to live abroad, but Lord Melvern had represented, that his quitting the kingdom for any length of time, would be incompatible with the duty of his profession ; so that he had given up that scheme, and now chiefly resided at Danesfield, his spirits continuing so extremely depressed, as to disincline him to society.

Louisa lamented that she should have destroyed the vivacity of this amiable young man ; yet she still thought that in her refusal she had acted right, and this idea always brings consolation.

" Had we been married," said she, " he would scarcely have contented himself with such a small income ; for his tenderness would make him fancy a thousand things necessary for me, the privation of which, as a single man, he is indifferent about. But by this wise regulation, he will, in the prime of life, find himself disencumbered of all his difficulties, and even enabled to please himself in the choice of a wife. Ah ! should he continue faithful, we may yet be united. 'Tis true, many heavy years must first revolve ; but what pain might not be supported, with such a prospect in view !"

Reflections such as these calmed her mind ; and insensibly the winter glided away with more comfort than most people would have had in such a dismal place, and with such a companion as Mrs. Gillinsby, who, far from being touched with
 Louisa's

Louisa's sweetness, seemed daily to become more gloomy and impracticable.

The rector of the parish had been almost the only visitor at Heath-hall, and he was little qualified to diffuse cheerfulness. Fixed above thirty years in this place, naturally extremely dull, his ideas now were entirely confined to the business of collecting his tithes, brewing his ale, fattening his bullocks, and afterwards regaling himself, but not his neighbours, with the produce of his industry. The indispensable duties of his function, he performed as a task, with as little edification to his parishioners, as gratification to himself. The mild and benevolent duties of man, he did not consider as part of his task, therefore he did not perform them at all.

Mrs. Gillinsby, however, who thought herself very pious, because nothing would make her omit any external mark of devotion, was quite satisfied with her rector, whose notions of religion were consonant to her own. At stated times she dispensed her charity, which was limited to a trifling sum, that no tale of distress could induce her to exceed. The rector dispensed still less, contenting himself with recommending the practice of this virtue to others. Both were inexorably severe to the offending poor; and because, from a combination of circumstances, they were not liable to fall into their errors, they considered themselves as models of perfection.

About this time Louisa was somewhat surprized at an extraordinary bustle in the family; some great event seemed pending, which, with all her penetration, she could not have foreseen. She knew not that the Duke of L.'s wife, from whom he was separated, lived only fifteen miles from

from Heath-hall; and for many years had been accustomed to pay her Lord's relation an annual visit, which generally took place at this season of the year, because of the length of the days.

The servants, unaccustomed to company, were put in strange confusion on this occasion; and their lady was obliged herself, to superintend the preparations making to entertain the Dutchess.

The day fixed for her arrival, Mrs. Gillinsby intimated it to Louisa, who felt some satisfaction in the idea of seeing a lady, whom Doctor Sandolph had mentioned with esteem, and for whom Lady Caroline S. had retained a very tender regard.

The Dutchess, who had expected to pass (as she had always done at Heath-hall) a very dull day, was agreeably surprized to find there so elegant a young person as Louisa. Sudden and violent in her prepossessions, she took an immediate liking to her; and upon hearing her name, discovered with infinite delight, that it was the same charming girl, whose history had interested her in her favour, when Lady Caroline had imparted it to her some time before.

She now lamented her ill fortune, in not having sooner known that she had such a treasure in her neighbourhood; and earnestly conjured Louisa speedily to make her amends, by favouring her with her company at Woodford; and Louisa, who thought she had little chance of meeting there, those she wished to avoid, and who had reason to expect many agreeable circumstances from a change of scene, gratefully accepted the invitation. An early day accordingly was fixed for her visit, and the Dutchess departed, quite enchanted with her new acquaintance.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gillinsby had likewise been invited, but she declined stirring from home ; and though she expressed no disapprobation of Louisa's intended visit, she observed, " that to her it seemed mighty odd, how people could take such sudden fancies, without knowing why or wherefore."

This polite remark only made Louisa smile, and think, in her own mind, that Mrs. Gillinsby would never herself excite any of those sudden partialities, which to her seemed so unaccountable.

The Dutchess sent her carriage for Louisa, some hours earlier than she expected it. This impatience was too flattering to be troublesome, and very unlike the indifference for her company, which Mrs. Gillinsby had invariably shewn.

Accustomed for so many months to Nature's most ungracious aspects, both local and human, Louisa, as she left the dreary heath, and once more beheld verdant meadows spotted with daisies ; trees just putting forth their tender foliage ; and Woodford, which seemed the habitation of elegance, felt her spirits revive.

The house was very gay, perfumed with most of the early spring flowers, and enlivened with the song of birds. To be received too with all the cordiality of friendship, and all the grace and politeness of a woman of fashion, was such a concurrence of pleasurable circumstances, as to produce sensations in Louisa's breast, which those only can imagine, who, like her, have long been immured with a disagreeable companion in some desolate place.

The Dutchess was an utter enemy to form and constraint ; immediately after Louisa's arrival, she resumed her usual avocations, and seemed so much

much at her ease, that Louisa could not fail of feeling so herself. Her Grace's pleasant manners and chearful conversation, tended to keep up her companion's spirits, to the pitch they had already acquired.

The Duchess was very fond of walking, and Louisa was delighted to accompany her.

Both loved reading and music; and the house was constantly supplied with all the best of the new literary, and musical publications. Every thing there was in the most elegant style; orderly servants, a well-served table, generally a social one; for the Duchess, amongst her neighbours, had discriminated a few suitable to her taste, who were welcome guests as often as they pleased. The rest she scarcely ever mixed with.

Louisa, could she have banished some tender recollections, in this house would have found herself in an element to which she was adapted. A week was the term destined for her visit; but the Duchess, happy to possess a companion, whose talents were a constant source of amusement, and whose disposition was so amiable as to engage every feeling heart, insisted upon her prolonging her stay; and at last, with the utmost reluctance, suffered her to return to her dreary abode, though not 'till she had obtained her promise of a second and longer visit.

Mrs. Gillinsby received her with no apparent satisfaction; indeed she seemed scarcely to have been sensible of her absence, which relieved Louisa from all scruples about renewing it.

At Heath-hall she found a letter from Mrs. Raby, in which was the following paragraph.

"Thou you seem to have little curiosity to know what is passing in the world, I cannot think
but

but that you must be delighted to hear you have no further persecutions to apprehend from Lord Pompoufton. He is married—Lady Bridget Wilford was with me yesterday, in great fpirits, and moft prodigiously elated at her nephew's marriage with a Neapolitan Countefs, who is, as ſhe tells me, a woman of the firſt rank, and likely to have an immense fortune; ſhe is, beſides, extremely beautiful.

Such a concurrence of deſirable circumſtances (for merit was thrown into the ſcale) in favour of ſo unworthy an object, puts me out of all patience; eſpecially when I reflect, that my amiable friend, whoſe beauty and merit are unrivalled, is buried, God knows where, in the country.

It ſeems, Lord Pompoufton, after experiencing unremitting cruelty from you, inſtead of hanging himſelf in deſpair, thought it more adviſable to go and diſſipate his chagrin at Bath, where he became acquainted with this paragon. How he won her, I know not; but Lady Bridget, and her niece, are ruining themſelves in preparations to ſupport the dignity of their family, and to receive this foreign lady, in a ſtyle of magnificence ſuitable to Lord Pompoufton's pride, and their own vanity. 'The new married pair are expected in town to-morrow.'

Louiſa was indeed delighted at this news, and ſcarcely could pity the fate of any woman, who could find attractions in ſuch a man as Lord Pompoufton.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE Duchefs, who longed for Louifa's return, inceffantly reminded her of her promise, and ſhe fulfilled it with pleaſure.—An encrease of intimacy, could not fail of producing ſome degree of confidence between them, eſpecially on the part of the Duchefs; whoſe diſpoſition was extremely communicative, and unreſtrained, by ſuch motives of delicacy, as would naturally induce a young perſon to be more reſerved. At firſt, the latter had cautiously forborne mentioning the Duke, or his family; but ſhe ſoon found, by the numerous queſtions the Duchefs put to her, concerning her abode in Shropſhire, that L. Caſtle, and its inhabitants, were ever uppermoſt in her thoughts; and now being perfectly convinced of her young friend's diſcretion, ſhe indulged herſelf in ſpeaking of her huſband, who Louifa found, was ſtill very dear to her, notwithſtanding their unfortunate ſeparation, which ſhe candidly acknowledged, had been in a great meaſure occaſioned by her own imprudence.

“ I was very young when I married,” ſaid ſhe, “ and paſſionately fond of the Duke;—of courſe I was rather diſpoſed to be jealous, and being naturally of an impatient diſpoſition, could not brook the leaſt neglect.

The Duke had loved me, but he ſoon became indifferent; and his inſtancy filled me with rage and vexation. In this frame of mind, I had the folly to introduce a young perſon into my family, whoſe manners were as inſinuating, as her principles

principles were corrupt. The latter you may be sure, I did not suspect, and in the confidence of friendship, I revealed to her, what every wife ought most carefully to conceal—the disagreements between the Duke and myself. Frequently when my heart has been longing to be reconciled to him, her presence, and the raillery which I knew awaited me, at what she termed my weakness, withheld me from trying any conciliatory measures.

Ignorant that she was herself enamoured with my husband, I suffered myself to be guided by *her*, whose interest it was to widen every breach between us ; and the communications she received from me, furnished her with ample materials to ruin me in his esteem, which had survived his love. She did not pretend to disguise from me, that the Duke had a great friendship for her ; this I saw at first without jealousy, or uneasiness, because I firmly believed she was sincerely attached to me.

From her I learned that the Duke always spoke of me with contempt.—What, to a woman of any spirit, could be so mortifying ? By degrees she irritated me so excessively against him, that I fancied my affection totally extinguished.

At length his imprudence betrayed their guilty secret ; her perfidy clearly appeared, and I hastened to cast off the viper. I ought to have detested both ; but alas ! I soon found, when my resentment was a little subsided, that it was her alone I hated—Yet my pride would not suffer me to sue to him, who was the offender, for a reconciliation ; and I was unfortunately an object too indifferent, if not absolutely odious in his eyes, for him to think of making the least concession to me.

Lady

Lady Caroline S. who is, as you know, one of the most amiable of beings, and who had frequently mediated between us, was at this time absent ;—but pride and offended love, doubtless, would have baffled all her good endeavours, to prevent our separation.

The Duke secretly continued his intrigue with my false friend ; who for some time governed him entirely, and consequently kept alive his resentment against me ;—but it was her turn afterwards to experience his inconstancy. Her life was however, contracted to a very narrow span ; and I believe, though she supported herself miraculously against the world's censure, that her last moments were very miserable.

Lady Caroline, ever kind, tried once more to reconcile us ; but her brother had formed another attachment, just as her mediation began.

Now, I submit (though not without frequently repining) to my fate, convinced that 'tis certainly better I should live alone, than at L. Castle ; as I love the Duke much too well, ever to be a tame spectator of his gallantries, which I understand he has not yet discontinued."

Whatever little foibles the Duchess might have had, Louisa could not help pitying her very much. She was still young, elegant in her person, and remarkably agreeable ; such a woman seemed to deserve a better fate.

The Duchess, after this confidential conversation, expressed a wish that Louisa should be a little more open than she had yet been, in regard to her affairs ; and hinted, that it was reported she had refused Mr. Roseville. " This I regret," added she, " for I know him ; and indeed he is

an amiable young man. Are you much acquainted with him?"

"Not at all; I don't even know him by sight."

"Then, perhaps, if he were known to you, this match, which to me appears particularly desirable, might take place."

Louisa blushed, and said she never could think of it. Her objections she thought it needless to specify, as she dreaded entering upon a subject, which revived a thousand painful emotions; and the Duchefs perceiving that she was distressed, changed the conversation.

Two days after this, as Louisa was dressing for dinner, Marianne informed her, that some company were just arrived. When she went into the drawing-room, she found two gentlemen, whom the Duchefs presented to her. One was her Grace's nephew, Mr. Lynch.—Louisa had often heard her mention him, and knew he had been expected some time. The other was a Mr. Wilmot, a particular friend of Mr. Lynch.

These gentlemen seemed extremely struck with Louisa, particularly Mr. Wilmot, who eyed her so attentively, as to occasion her much embarrassment.

When the ladies retired after dinner, the Duchefs was very desirous of knowing, what opinion Louisa had conceived of her guests; but she said it was impossible to form any, in so short a time. In truth, Mr. Lynch had by no means answered the favourable description his partial aunt had given of him; he appeared to Louisa only a good humoured coxcomb. Mr. Wilmot had interested her far more; he had an air of ill health, which accompanying extreme youth, ever excites commiseration; his manners were natural, and pleasing

sing; and though he seemed to have seen little of the world, he was at no loss for conversation.

Louisa, after a few days acquaintance with Mr. Wilmot, secretly gave him a decided preference over his companion, who affected to be extremely fine, and whose understanding she suspected to be very shallow. Mr. Wilmot, on the contrary, appeared to her very sensible; but whether from ill health, or by nature, his disposition seemed softened to excess, and devoid of all manly firmness. He was passionately fond of music, and frequently so affected by it, that Louisa disliked playing to him. From the day of his arrival, he had attached himself so particularly to her, that though she thought him interesting, she behaved to him with greater reserve, than to Mr. Lynch; because he seemed just of a disposition likely to take a violent passion. It was very apparent that the Duchess wished this should be the case, and that it should be mutual.

In consequence of this remark, Louisa determined to shorten her stay at Woodford; but a severe cold, which she had lately caught, furnished the Duchess with an excuse for detaining her.

While she was still rather an invalid, Mr. Lynch one evening proposed to his aunt, driving her out in his phaeton, to which, after apologizing to Louisa for leaving her a couple of hours, she consented. Thus Louisa was left *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Wilmot, which was exactly the situation she had been solicitous to avoid, having but too much reason to think, that he only waited for such an opportunity, to explain clearly, all that a pair of very intelligent eyes had already intimated.

As she could not, without affectation, refuse to make tea for him, she endeavoured to fix his attention upon a literary subject, which she started, requesting him to favour her with his opinion. Wilmot, by short hurrying answers, tried to get rid of this discourse; but Louisa, with a volubility quite unusual to her, immediately raised another impediment, between him and his wishes; and though his natural timidity prevented his interrupting her, his absent looks, incoherent answers, and sometimes an impatient nod of his head, sufficiently apprized Louisa what she had to expect, if she gave him a moment's time to choose his own subject; she therefore suddenly arose, recollecting, as she said, that she had letters of consequence to write, and she was out of the room before Wilmot could make her hear his entreaties for her stay.

Thus disappointed, he ran to the stables, and taking out a horse, she saw him presently after gallop from the door. He had been gone a very little while, before Browne, the Duchess's groom of the chambers, tapped at her door, and said his Lady wished to speak with her in the conservatory.

"What!" cried she, "her Grace returned already? I have not heard the carriage."

"She came in the back way, Madam," said Browne; and Louisa instantly prepared to attend the Duchess; she concluded, that as this place was at no great distance from the house, and the evening being remarkably fine, she had thought a short walk, and a little air, would do her good.

This conservatory was very charming; it was formed upon a vast scale; a long wall (but completely hidden by plants) alone remained in the summer;

summer ; the rest of the apparatus, necessary in the winter, was removed. The centre of the wall was hollowed into a beautiful little pavillion, surrounded by a low Turkish sofa, and furnished with a table, books, and implements for writing. It received no light, but from the entrance ; on each side of which, a grove of tall orange and myrtle trees, growing with great luxuriance in the earth, and a variety of shrubs and flowers of exquisite beauty and perfume, rendered this a most delicious spot.

It was almost dusk when Louisa entered the pavillion ; and she was not a little startled to perceive, instead of the Duchefs, a stranger seated upon the sofa ; she was hastening back, but he flew towards her, and taking her hand, discovered, to her astonished eyes, the Duke of L. !

“ Good God ! my Lord Duke,” cried she, “ what brings you here ?”

“ I will tell you presently,” said he, “ if you will stay to hear me.”

“ Does the Duchefs know that you are come ?”

“ Certainly not : my business was not with *her* ; and it was I, who took the liberty to send to you.”

“ Your Grace must excuse my staying a minute,” said Louisa, gravely, not at all pleased at the deception.

“ Do not,” cried he vehemently, “ deprive me so soon of a happiness, which I have long eagerly wished for ; and believe me, this is the last place I should have come to, but for the sake of seeing my charming friend.”

“ I was in hopes,” said Louisa, that a laudable motive had brought you hither ; and I am not a little disappointed, that I should be the person

son you seek here. Nothing can reconcile *me* to this strange visit, but to hear from your Grace, that you wish me, to use my influence with the Duchess to be reconciled to *you*."

"Indeed I have no such wish;" said the Duke, laughing; "chance discovered to me that you were here, and ——"

"What chance?" interrupted Louisa.

"Why, having in vain, for some time past, endeavoured to discover what was become of you, it occurred to me, that Dr. Sandolph possibly might have placed you with his sister; and as I was going northwards, I thought it not amiss to call in my way upon my cousin Gillinsby, and satisfy my doubts. From her, I learned all I wished, except that you were here; the only place in the world, where there could be a difficulty about seeing you. However, I sent for Browne to the inn at the park gate, where I have been incognito these two days; and told him, I had a great desire to see Miss Roseville. This man was formerly my own servant, and much attached to me, though I gave him up to accommodate the Duchess; so you may imagine he was pleased to see me, and possibly took it into his silly head, that I came in a favourable disposition towards his lady. I let him think what he pleased, and trusted to his contrivance to obtain me a sight of my lovely friend, which he never was able to accomplish till this evening."

"Your Grace has given yourself much unnecessary trouble," said Louisa, courtesying to go.

"What," cried he, "are you insensible to the tender friendship (I wish I dared substitute a shorter word) which has brought me even into the
lionsess's

lioneſs's den to ſee you, with a view of perſuading you to honour me with a viſit at L. Caſtle ?”

“ O certainly ?” ſaid Louiſa, “ the Duchefs will be infinitely delighted with this ſcheme.”

“ The Duchefs again !” cried the Duke, impatiently, “ what can it be to her ? I wiſh to God, at this moment, that you would forget ſhe exiſts.”

“ I muſt firſt forget a world of kindneſs ;” returned Louiſa, “ and as I ſhould be extremely ſorry, that your unexpected appearance ſhould flurry and diſtreſs her, I do entreat you, Duke of L. to retire immediately ; unleſs you chooſe to honour me with ſome meſſage or propoſition, that might be agreeable to my reſpectable friend.”

“ Why harp upon this ſtring, dear Miſs Roſe-ville ! what propoſition can I have to make to a woman, who does not care a ſtraw about me ; whom I have not had any connection with for years ? indeed, this is an unpleaſant theme, the only one in the world, that I ſhould decline treating with you.”

“ Unfortunately, my Lord Duke,” ſaid Louiſa, “ the caſe is juſt the reverſe with me ; but, before we part, give me leave to ſay, I know you are unjuſt to a moſt amiable woman, who, ſo far from feeling indifferent to you, regrets daily the fatal ſeparation that has taken place ; and retains for you an affection, that neither your coldneſs nor inſtancy (pardon my ſincerity) has deſtroyed. As for me, as I have often told your Grace, I decline all friendſhip with any of your ſex ; but could I have the ſatiſfaction to behold your reunion with the Duchefs, I certainly would make an exception in your favour, and under her auſpices,

ces, have the honour of waiting on you both at L. Castle."

"This is the oddest fancy imaginable," cried the Duke, "that you will not accept of my friendship, without such an intolerable clog! I see you have been greatly misinformed in this affair—be assured, the Duchess's violent temper, and ridiculous jealousy, rendered it impossible for us to live together. She might have retained my heart had she possessed your sense, and sweetness of disposition; for I did love her, till I discovered, that she was all fire and fury."

"And had she no provocation?" asked Louisa, looking at him with a penetrating eye.

"None can justify violence in a woman: but why talk about her? 'tis a subject that still agitates me."

"I would wish it should—Heaven forbid you should be insensible to her wrongs!—review them in your mind, Duke of L. and generously determine to repair them; the Duchess, I am persuaded, would think a renewal of your affection, sufficient reparation."

"Pshaw! pshaw! I know her much better than you do:—were I such a fool, as to consent to receive her, the consequence would be, that ten times a day she would recapitulate her grievances, recount her sufferings, and patient forbearance. Then, she would never suffer a pretty woman to come near my house; I should see nothing but monsters in my family. Whenever I stirred, she would be watching me; and teasing me on my return with impertinent questions: if I looked gay, she would charitably suppose I had some intrigue on my hands; and if sad, that it was owing to my dislike of her. Even you, who plead
her

her cause so generously, would no longer be her darling friend ; beauty, like yours, would torture her with jealousy, even to madness.

No, my dear Madam ; do not imagine, that after having so long enjoyed my liberty, I shall be disposed to shackle myself again. A mild woman might have fixed my wavering disposition. A violent woman has driven me into a course of life, which I shall not easily renounce ; unless I could find a tender sympathizing friend, whose charming conversation would be a balm to my heart.

Nor need any woman's principles oppose such a friendship ; for my regard for her, would be so pure and disinterested, that I never would solicit for more than she were inclined to grant."

Louisa was just beginning to say, she hoped no woman would trust to such specious language, when she was alarmed by the sound of the Duchess's voice, almost close to the conservatory. Speechless with terror, ignorant what to devise, she sunk down pale and trembling on the sofa.

But the Duke's presence of mind did not desert him ; he hastened to slip behind the orange trees, and crouching down, flattered himself the shades of the evening, which were fast coming on, would favour his concealment. For though, being surprised by his wife, was a matter of little consequence to *him*, it could not be so to Louisa, whose innocence might not save her from a very unpleasant imputation.

Scarcely had the Duke disappeared, before the Duchess and Mr. Lynch entered the pavilion.

" So ; what all alone," cried the former, " what have you done with Mr. Wilmot ?"

Louisa

Louisa mustered up courage to speak, and said, he had been gone out a riding some time, and proposed their returning to the house.

"No, no;" cried the Duchess, "'tis a sweet evening; we will sit here, and enjoy the fragrance of the orange flowers."

Louisa, who could enjoy nothing at that moment, said it was damp; but the Duchess insisted that it was impossible her health could suffer, as no dew could reach her.

During this conversation, Mr. Lynch walked up and down the conservatory, humming an air; and with a little switch in his hand slightly striking the trees: Louisa, almost sick with apprehension, lest he should see the Duke, cried out, "Why, you will beat off all the blossoms.—Pray how is your favourite mare to night?"

"Ods so, I am glad you have mentioned her; I'll step this instant to the stables."

His absence was some relief to Louisa.

"Well, now he is gone," said the Duchess, "let me hear poor Wilmot's doleful history, for I dare say you have been cruel to him."

Louisa vexed to be required to speak upon such a matter before her secret auditor, gave an evasive answer; and in her turn, put some questions to the Duchess, who after a little raillery on the subject of Wilmot's love, and her cruelty, accused her of an excess of reserve towards herself, quite incompatible with friendship.

"You know," cried she, "the confidence I have already reposed in you, and to encourage you to have as much in me, I will not have a thought that shall not be revealed to you. Though you are acquainted with part of my history, still there is a
circumstance

circumstance I have not mentioned. A man of fashion, handsome, and very amiable——.”

“ Indeed,” said Louisa, in a low voice, “ we had better go home ; I thought I saw a bat just now.”

“ Pho, pho ;—This man you must know, I met frequently at the house of one of my friends, just after I was parted from my husband——.”

“ Whom you still love too well,” interrupted Louisa, little pleased with this preface, which seemed tending to destroy the position she had attempted to establish, “ to be in any danger of liking another.”

“ Pardon me,” said the Duchefs, “ if you consider that my resentment at that time was very high ; that this person was as I have told you very pleasing, and insinuating to a great degree ; you will perceive that my heart was more in danger than you imagine. However, I do assure you, though I knew his merit, all his endeavours to supplant my undutiful husband, were ineffectual.”

He now began to revive.

“ He has since,” continued the Duchefs, “ presumed to consider me as a single woman, and to hint to me his passion ; the consequence has been, that now I constantly refuse to see, or hear of him.”

You do very right,” said Louisa, and then considering, that if she could draw from the Duchefs’s own mouth an unequivocal declaration of her sentiments for the Duke, it might make some impression upon him, as it was impossible he could suspect any artifice. With this view she said, “ you seem, my dear Madam, to doubt the warmth of my attachment to you, but were my heart laid open, you could not fail of being satisfied

with it. Would to God I could prove it more effectually than by words ! here in this very place, I have been ruminating upon your unpleasant situation, and wishing I were of sufficient consequence to become a mediatrix between you and the Duke ;—but perhaps, some latent anger still remains in your heart, and you would not consent to live with him again.”

“ Not consent !” cried the Duchefs with energy, “ would to God I were put to the trial ! But, my sweet friend, that will never happen ; he hates and detests me ; and knowing how little he merits it, does not imagine that I still love him.

“ Perhaps,” said Louisa, “ you may yet be happy re-united—the texture of conjugal affection is fine and delicate ; difficult, when once torn asunder ever to be joined again : besides too, the least tincture of jealousy, any recrimination, or inequality of temper, would be likely to sever it anew.”

“ O no ;” cried the Duchefs, quickly, “ were we once reconciled, we should part no more ; and so far from thinking with you, I am convinced we should be happier together now, than ever we were, even in the first months after our marriage. I am no longer that petulant impatient creature I was, when full of youthful vivacity, and warmth of passion, I scorned to regain a heart by gentleness, to which I imagined I had an indisputable right.

Disappointment and vexation have lowered my pride, and softened my disposition. In the leisure of retirement, I have formed an acquaintance with myself ; and the inclination of correcting my errors, has followed the discovery of them.

My

My plan of conduct now, should be exactly opposite to that I so unfortunately pursued. Attentions, confidence, and above all, gentleness, should be tried ; my love should neither be jealous, nor prodigally lavished ; for the Duke is of a disposition likely to be surfeited with too much fondness ; therefore I would pretend to no more than his friendship, trusting to time, and my unremitting endeavours to make home agreeable to him, for a more tender hold on his heart."

At that moment Mr. Wilmot appeared in the conservatory, and both the ladies rose to join him.

Louisa, delighted that the Duke had not only escaped discovery, but that he had heard a conversation which, though it began somewhat untowardly, had concluded greatly to her satisfaction. She had almost longed to drag him out of his retreat, when she hoped his wayward disposition had been softened by her friend's tenderness ; but if she were in this mistaken, besides the awkward predicament in which she should herself stand, instead of doing good, she might make matters worse, therefore she checked the impulse.

Mr. Wilmot told the Duchesse, that not being so happy as to obtain Miss Roseville's company for more than a quarter of an hour, he had taken a solitary ride. During supper, his dejected looks besought Louisa's pity, which internally, she did not withhold ; but sensible, that if she were to shew him any, it would give hopes to a passion, she wished to extinguish in its dawn, she behaved to him with her usual reserve, and publicly announced her intention of going home the next day.

The Duchess's acquiescence was most reluctantly given ; and Mr. Wilmot, turning pale at the news, presently after retired, quite disordered.

Had Louisa's heart been free, she would not have bestowed it on Wilmot. A disposition that, without the least resistance, sunk under the influence of passion, denoted no energy of character ; and the natural heroism of her own mind, though it did not prevent her feeling the softest pity for the weakness of others, yet disclaimed any alliance with it.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE next morning at breakfast, the Duchess, to cheer Mr. Wilmot's spirits, who looked as if he had passed a sleepless night, proposed that they should all accompany Miss Roseville to Heath-hall. Mr. Wilmot's eyes instantly sparkled with joy; and Mr. Lynch, who was of a very *sans souci* disposition, said, coolly, he thought it no bad scheme. Louisa, of course, expressing her approbation, the coach, instead of the chaise, was ordered.

Mr. Wilmot contrived to seize her hand, and as he led her to the carriage, he seemed to have something to utter, that timidity kept back; however, some incoherent phrases did escape him, expressive of deep regret at losing her, and of the highest esteem and regard; and to give greater energy to his words, he tenderly pressed her hand. Louisa drew it back, and had but just time to entreat he would think of nothing but the restoration of his health, and not bestow more upon her, than his good wishes, as these were all she could offer in return; she flattered herself, by being thus explicit now, she should prevent his being more so hereafter.

Mr. Wilmot, chagrined, sat silent in a corner of the coach. The Duchess and Louisa were neither of them in spirits; and there would have been but little conversation, had not Mr. Lynch thought it necessary to exert himself to amuse them: but though he was a man of the *ton*, dressed in exact imitation of a very great personage, and valued himself on being able to drink an amazing

quantity of champagne, his powers of amusing were not very considerable. He was extremely ignorant, without being in the least ashamed of it; but a pliancy of temper, great spirits, and good humour, rendered him not unwelcome to society.

The carriage had proceeded about five miles, when a sudden cry of "stop! stop!" alarmed the company, with an immediate apprehension that they were going to be robbed. Lynch swore at his servants for forgetting to bring his pistols, and was preparing, with a slight cane in his hand, to fall out of the carriage. Wilmot sat seemingly unconcerned in his corner; and the Duchess and Louisa were getting ready their purses, not a little frightened—when a man in livery, (almost breathless with hard riding) who had been the cause of this alarm, rode up to the window, and addressing himself to Wilmot, begged his honour would come home directly, as his father had fallen that morning into a fit, from which he was not recovered when he came away, though immediate assistance had been procured.

Roused by this speech, Wilmot darted out of the coach, and ordering the man to dismount, vaulted into the saddle, and galloped off. The Duchess told one of her attendants to give up his horse to the servant, desiring he would hasten after his master; and her own servant she ordered to get up behind the carriage. But, to her great amazement, before Mr. Wilmot had gone many yards, he returned.

"I have been thinking," cried he, "that I might as well proceed to Heath-hall, as I can (I suppose) get a chaise in the village, which will carry me to Roseville, almost as fast as this old hack."

The

The Duchefs coloured excessively ; and Louisa, how thought she had not only recognized the Roseville livery, but even in the servant, the very groom who had been so instrumental in delivering her from Lord Pompoufton, was now at no lofs to guefs who Mr. Wilmot was. Her fignificant looks betrayed her thoughts ; but the Duchefs. at that moment feemed only occupied in urging the young man not to postpone his attendance on his father ; she well knew why he had changed his mind fo suddenly ; but though she approved of his attachment to Louisa, she could not fail of difcouraging fuch an ill-timed proof of it. Affhamed of his own irresolution, he once more vanifhed.

Louisa forbore making any remarks on the difcovery she had made, till she found herself alone with the Duchefs ; for Mrs. Gillinsby did not immediately appear, and Mr. Lynch left the ladies to themselves. At first both were filent and embarrassed ; but Louisa, determined to have her doubts cleared up, faid with a grave air,

“ May I request the favour of your Grace, to inform me of the real name of your friend, Mr. Wilmot ?”

“ I fee you know it,” faid the Duchefs ; “ and I perceive by your air, that you are difpleafed, but, indeed, you have no caufe. The deception furely is very innocent, and done, with no other view, than to obviate certain little delicate fcruples, you might have to form an acquaintance with Sir Charles Roseville’s fon, which, I own, I wifhed extremely that you fhould.”

“ And why, Madam, fhould you wifh this ? What end can it anfwer ?”

"It might have answered a very good one, had you taken as great a fancy to him, as he has done to you."

"But I had told your Grace, that I never could think of this connection."

"Yes; but then you had never seen him; and I hoped your objections would diminish, when you became acquainted with his worth."

"I believe him to be amiable; and I forbear to censure him," said Louisa, "for imposing himself upon me under a feigned name, since you, Madam, condescended to take a part in this scheme; but, I confess, he would not be the object of my approbation, if I had not insurmountable objections against changing my condition."

"Objections! repeated the Duchess; "why should you have any? Surely you have too much good sense to indulge romantic fancies; and your situation is such, as must be highly disagreeable to you. Why, therefore, spurn the offer of a man of family and fortune; amiable, tender, and sensible, whose father acknowledges your merit, and who (proud as he is) would receive you with exultation in his family: his son absolutely adores you, tho' he never could take courage to tell you so. Suffer me then to plead his cause, unless you will permit him to do it himself."

Louisa, thus pushed, found herself obliged to reveal the secret of her heart; but this confession had not the effect she expected.

"You acknowledge yourself," said the Duchess, "that you have refused to marry the object of your preference, from a conviction that such an union would be detrimental to him. This sacrifice of love to prudence, is generous, and worthy of you; but why leave it incomplete? So long as you con-
 tinue

tinue single, he will still entertain hopes, that you may be softened in his favour; and should he discover your retreat, are you sure your heroism would not be subdued by his tender intreaties? While he is at a distance, you may fortify yourself against him; and, instead of suffering your life to waste in unavailing tenderness and regret, you might pass it, with Mr. Roseville, happily and honourably, in the bosom of an affluent and respectable family."

Louisa, too faithfully attached to Lord Dane-field, to suffer her thoughts to dwell with the least complacency upon this scheme of happiness, entreated the Duchess to dismiss the subject; for though very sensible, she said, of her kind motives in wishing this alliance, it pained her even to think of it.

The Duchess however, who really loved Louisa excessively, and had her interest very much at heart, which she thought could not be so well promoted as by this match, did not easily give up her solicitations: for she was not exempt from a very common foible; that of fancying *herself* the most competent judge of what was best for her friends; and when once she had determined any project ought to succeed, it was scarcely possible to convince her, it ought not. The warmth she displayed on this occasion, gave Louisa some suspicion, that she had made less progress in calming the impetuosity of her disposition, than she had fancied; however Mrs. Gillinsby's entrance put an end to this conversation, the Duchess whispering Louisa, that she would write to her the next day.

After half an hour's chat with the lady of the house, the Duchess departed; first tenderly embracing

bracing Louisa, who, though she differed with her in opinion, was extremely grateful for her kindness, and expressed her sense of it in the strongest terms, at the moment she bade her farewell.

Mrs. Gillinsby was one of those persons, who never allow themselves to confess they are displeased; yet gather up with provident care, a load of fancied wrongs, with which they swell indignant; and by never suffering any part to exhale in complaints, the stock continues undiminished. This woman was vexed the Duchess should, in a much shorter acquaintance than her's, with Louisa, discover in her, excellencies which she was incapable of feeling; and she was offended with Louisa, for preferring Woodford to Heath-hall.

Her laconic disposition has been already mentioned; but of late she was still more frugal of words, and rather inclined to speak at, than to Louisa.

Two days after the latter returned home, she received the following letter:

To MISS ROSEVILLE.

“ My dear Miss ROSEVILLE,

I had not time the other day to say half what I wished, and principally I omitted explaining the circumstance relative to Mr. Roseville, which I am grieved, that you disapproved of. If any thing was wrong in it, I alone am to blame.

Before ever I had the pleasure of seeing you, I was prepared to admire you; for besides Lady Caroline's encomiums, I had heard your conduct mentioned with the highest approbation, by a friend of mine, who is now abroad; this gentleman is
likewise

likewise much connected with Sir Charles Roseville. He told me of the extraordinary renunciation you had made of the greatest part of your property ; which, together with other anecdotes much to your credit, had inspired Sir Charles with the most perfect esteem for your character ; and a regret (perhaps a proud regret, that he could not display equal generosity) that you would neither accept of his son, nor of any compensation he could offer.

It is unnecessary to tell you, the progress you made in my esteem, as our intimacy increased ; but the more I knew you, the more I lamented, that beauty, talents, and merit, should thus be buried in obscurity. I mentioned Mr. Roseville to you, but though the theme seemed displeasing, I still hoped an acquaintance with him, might remove any prejudice you had conceived ; perhaps do still more,—decide you in his favour. I had learned from my nephew, that his heart was free ; that he had pictured you to himself, as a model of perfection, and wished for nothing so much as to see you. With the most friendly motives therefore to both parties, I drew him to my house ; he knew whom he was to meet ; but when he heard that I wished he would assume a feigned name, as a more likely means of forming an acquaintance with you, who would less suspect my plan, than if he appeared in his proper character,—his delicacy was alarmed, and it was with great difficulty I overcame his scruples. Sir Charles is quite ignorant of these transactions ; his son's coming to Woodford, appeared to him nothing extraordinary, for he had visited my nephew there before.

What:

What passed afterwards, I need not mention ; but I must observe, that I am now doubly interested, that Mr. Roseville should not find you inexorable, not only because I retain my opinion of the advantages you would derive from this alliance, but likewise, because, if it should not take place, I shall have reason to reproach myself with having been accessary to the miseries which this amiable young man will feel from the pangs of unrequited love.

Had you at first been less reserved with me, my zeal for him would have been less fervent. But I knew not that you had an attachment ; and now after having gone so far, I cannot recede without making this last attempt to move you in Mr. Roseville's favour.—Consider well, my dear young friend, whether you cannot conquer your predilection for another object ; for however deserving he may be, since you own, you thought it right to refuse, why persist in a romantic fidelity to him ? — And why refuse to let another man (perhaps full as amiable, and wholly unobjectionable) try to win your heart ?

It was prudent to reject the first—It would be imprudent to reject the other.

Think what delight I should feel, in seeing you comfortably settled in this county, at no great distance from me. The reflection that I had been instrumental to your felicity, would almost console me for what is wanting to my own.

It is the duty of friendship to advise, and represent ; think me not therefore importunate, but believe me to be with great truth,

My dear Miss Roseville,

Your very sincere friend,

And faithful servant,

Woodford, July, 178—

CATHERINE L."

Louisa

Louisa was extremely vexed at the Duchess's strange perseverance in pushing this point; but good naturedly attributing much of this pertinacity to the warmth of friendship, she couched her refusal in terms that could not displease her Grace, and strongly expressed her gratitude, and the sincerity of her attachment to her, who honoured her with the appellation of friend.

But what the Duchess had alledged in her own justification, relative to the artifice she had employed, did not alter Louisa's dislike to it; and as her Grace knew the susceptibility of Mr. Roseville's disposition, and her repugnance to any alliance with him, she thought the scheme extremely ill judged.

A few days after, with some surprize, she received a letter from the Duke of L.

He said, that in obedience to her commands, he had left Woodford within two hours after he had heard the singular conversation which had passed between her and the Duchess in the conservatory, where his situation had not been very commodious; for he had been all that time, bent almost double behind the orange trees, dreading every moment that he should be discovered.

That he admired her zeal for her friend, the beginning of whose discourse must have alarmed her not a little; and he must own it greatly excited his own curiosity, but it had terminated in a manner he had not expected; and thanks to her, who had assisted the Duchess in developing her sentiments, she had discovered a fund of tenderness for him, and a degree of reason and reflection, which he had not thought she possessed. But added he, "a French author justly observes, *Il faut avoir la precaution de ne pas donner une trop grande attente*

attente de ce qu'on doit faire ; il est certain que l'imagination des personnes auxquelles on promet quelque chose d'extraordinaire, surpasse souvent tout ce qu'on leur presente dans la suite.

This, my dear Madam, I fear would be the case with your friend. At present she lays down excellent rules, while her mind is calm and composed ; but believe me, I speak from experience, the least contradiction she met with, or should she one instant suspect that I could enjoy any pleasure without her participation, or the most trifling attention paid to another woman, would instantly banish all these prudent resolutions, and she would relapse into her natural violence of temper.

Be assured, that however fond she is of you at present, she would cease to be so, if once settled at L. Castle.

At the same time that I candidly confess to you my disbelief of the Duchess's reformation, I will own, that I could not see and hear her in the pavilion, without emotion ; nay, I was once more than half inclined to have come forward, and to press her to my heart ; but the awkwardness of appearing thus abruptly before her, and the recollection of our past uneasinesses, rivetted me to the ground ; and when the enthusiasm of the moment was passed, I congratulated myself on my forbearance.

The Duchess has a warm advocate in my sister ; she has ever been desirous of effectuating a reconciliation between us. But you, Madam, have more influence with me than any body ; and were it possible for me to conquer my unwillingness to this measure, undoubtedly it would be merely as a preliminary step to your favour. Your gentle reasoning, and soft persuasive looks, might make me do any thing. Do not therefore, as you value

lue your friend the Duchefs, confign me to oblivion; you fee *her* interest requires that you should enter into a correspondence with me. 'This will be a stronger inducement to you to confer this favour upon me, than any thing I could urge. How delighted I should be, if a motive more flattering to myself could actuate you!

I have the honour to be

M A D A M,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,
L——."

Louisa easily penetrating into the Duke's artful schemes, determined to take no notice of his letter, for well as she loved the Duchefs, she could not think, even with the most commendable motives, of entering into a clandestine correspondence with her husband. Besides her aversion to mysterious actions, and the inconveniences she might draw upon herself, she began to suspect that happiness might not be the consequence of their re-union; and then her interference would become matter of regret to all parties.

If in the breast of a man of professed gallantry, such as the Duke, any tenderness could remain for his wife; what had passed lately, must have revived it; and though perhaps, false shame, and other obstacles might endeavour to stifle it, still it would, because it was a reasonable and laudable inclination, in time manifest itself: and that this should happen from the spontaneous working of his own mind, was necessary towards the happiness of her friend.

Perhaps too, if she heartily wished it, the Duchefs might really in time attain that self-command and gentleness of disposition, which at present

present she only possessed in imagination. People are, as Johnson observes, "at last incited to execute what they please themselves with contriving." Louisa had remarked with regret, that she had a ready flow of words, and a facility of displaying refined sentiments, which, upon a strict investigation of her character, seemed only to float upon the surface; not that she meant to deceive, for at the moment she was thus elegantly sentimental, she was perfectly sincere: but if any accidental circumstance ruffled her temper, then her actions indicated a mind preoccupied with sentiments, that were by no means consistent with her language.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHILE Louisa was ruminating on these matters, she was most agreeably surprized to hear her valuable friend, Doctor Sandolph, was just arrived; she was down stairs, and in his arms, in an instant. A thousand tender enquiries passed between them; and it was some time before the effusions of their joy would permit their conversation to take any regular form.

The good doctor lamented, that first, the severity of the winter, and afterwards frequent attacks of the gout, had prevented his visiting her sooner. He came, he said, not only to enquire after her health, and how she liked her situation, but likewise, as she was now of age, to give up his accounts into her hands; and to learn her final determination in regard to the estate in Kent, which she had promised to surrender to Sir Charles Roseville; at the same time hinting, that he knew Sir Charles would readily dispense with the performance of so rash, and imprudent a promise.

Louisa said, she considered that affair as already settled; and nothing remained to be done, but to send him, without loss of time, the title deeds, together with a formal renunciation of all claim to that property, signed by herself, and properly witnessed.

Doctor Sandolph gave a deep groan; but knowing it was in vain to contest the point, he agreed to act conformably to her wishes. Some consolation

tion he felt, by observing, that the country air, and regular hours, had wrought an admirable change in her appearance; her complexion was quite dazzling, and her eyes seemed to sparkle with additional lustre.

“Surely, my dear child,” cried he, “you do not mean to bury yourself eternally here? I never can think two persons of such different ages, tastes, and tempers, as yourself and my sister, formed to coalesce.”

Louisa thought so too; but she felt, that it was an awkward circumstance to explain to Doctor Sandolph, her reasons for being dissatisfied with his sister; great causes of complaint she could not alludge; small ones seemed beneath her notice; and unpleasant as was her situation, she felt (now that she hoped to hear no more of Mr. Roseville) averse to quit it, unless she could be certain of finding one equally retired, and perfectly eligible. She therefore said, that for the present, she was content to remain at Heath-hall, not having yet quite decided on her plans for the future.

“You will be surprized,” said Doctor Sandolph, “to hear, that I did not come hither alone.” Louisa started, and he continued with a smile, “my niece would insist upon accompanying me—had I refused her, she would have been confirmed in her suspicion, that you were here; and her disposition is such, that to plague me, she would have mentioned it, as a certainty, to every creature. But, as she is not ungenerous, by trusting her with a secret, you may, I believe, assure yourself, we will not betray it.”

Doctor Sandolph then, with an arch look, asked Louisa, whether Miss Sandolph was the person she expected to hear, had been his companion on his journey.

Louisa

Louisa blushed, and with a faltering voice, enquired after Lord Danefield.

"Strange girl!" cried Doctor Sandolph;—"your romantic delicacy has probably devoted both his lordship and yourself, to a state of solitary misery. He lives quite retired at his seat in Dorsetshire, invariably adhering to his plan of œconomy; and yet, though he has little to give, he continues to do good, and to make himself adored in his neighbourhood."

"Amiable Danefield!" softly exclaimed Louisa, wiping off a tear from her cheek; but another quickly following, she turned towards the window.

"He goes rarely to town," continued Doctor Sandolph. "When he lost you, he became, I believe, insensible to pleasure—."

"No more, my dear Sir! say no more," interrupted Louisa, waving one hand, while with the other she hid her streaming eyes. Silence for some minutes ensued; Doctor Sandolph reproaching himself for having touched so delicate a subject; and Louisa exerting herself to regain her wonted composure.

In a little while she was in a condition to join the ladies in the drawing-room. Miss Sandolph seemed extremely delighted to see her, nor was Louisa ungrateful for this mark of regard.

It was rather flattering to please Miss Sandolph, because so very few could succeed in doing it. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the manners and conversation of the aunt and niece.

The former, invariably cold and repelling, even in her civility, seldom broke through her starch taciturnity; and the sight of her brother (whom she professed to love) seemed scarcely to warm her heart.

The

The latter, always at her ease, perfectly well-bred, and glowing with whatever passion was predominant in her breast, spoke much, and well; not in the least scrupling to cut up whoever she disliked.

As soon as she had an opportunity of speaking alone with Louisa, after answering her enquiries after Lady Caroline S. and Mrs. Saunders, she gave her to understand, that she would not have gone three miles to see her aunt, though she would willingly have gone three million to see her.

Such an overflow of kindness could not fail of touching Louisa's gentle nature, for she knew that it was sincere, as Miss Sandolph was quite incapable of feigning sentiments she did not feel. Louisa easily engaged her to promise, she would not mention having seen her, nor where she was.

Miss Sandolph then expressed her surprize, at her choice of Heath-hall for her abode. "What sin can you have committed," cried she, "that should make you think it necessary, to do penance here? why I would as soon immure myself with a torpedo, as with my aunt Gillinsby; her very looks are petrifying; indeed, I suspect she has already communicated some portion of this quality to you, for if I do not greatly mistake, yonder is poor Lord Danesfield, at least the best part of him, turned into clay."

Louisa, who had imagined this bust, placed high on a bracket would have escaped observation, coloured extremely, but could not refrain from a smile, accompanied with a secret satisfaction, that her memory had enabled her to form so striking a resemblance of her beloved lord. Superior to all little arts, she did not deny, that when she had attempted to mould a bust of an Apollo,
Lord

Lord Danefield's features had recurred to her imagination, and insensibly the clay had assumed his likeness.

After Miss Sandolph had admired several other proofs of Louisa's taste and skill, she again mentioned her aunt.

" 'Tis now," said we, about twenty years since she married. Many things in this world are quite unaccountable; what induced her and Mr. Gillinby to marry each other, I never could guess. My aunt had neither youth, beauty, nor fortune, to tempt him. Perhaps, the poor man's notion of the chief merit in a wife, did not differ widely from some sign painters I have seen, who represent a good woman without a head. Now to be sure, my aunt might just as well be without one, for any use she makes of her's; but if he solaced his imagination with the quiet he should enjoy with a person, whose silent disposition secured his ears from being annoyed with scolding, he forgot that frowns, angry nods, and shrugs may be just as teasing as words.

As for Mr. Gillinby, he was a country esquire, possessed of a small estate, and this sweet place. He was one of those fat figures that one sees in every country town; sometimes in the shape of an attorney, an exciseman, or an innkeeper; with short arms, thick legs, a broad shining face, and a boundless forehead; a bob wig, and a flaming scarlet waistcoat, naturally appertain to a man of this description.

When I have said a few more words about Mr. Gillinby, you will easily guess of what rate his understanding was. To run about, in quest of news, to which he would eagerly listen, with his mouth half open, was his chief business, and to
tell

tell long winded stories, of which nobody could wish to remember one syllable, was his chief delight. He was much addicted to laugh immoderately at nothing; but in the midst of his exuberant mirth, my aunt would cast upon him one of her chilling looks; and then it was comical to see how quickly his face would purse up, and in an awkward attempt at gravity, become ridiculously dismal. In regard to hearts, he and my aunt were much upon a par; for he had little more feeling than she has; but he was of a sociable disposition, loved cards and company, though he was seldom allowed to indulge in either.

I remember once, when I came here upon a visit, my aunt was obliged to go to town on business; (for she retained not only the disposal of her own fortune, but insisted on managing his) while she was absent, Mr. Gillinsby, very good-naturedly, invited some young persons, who then lived in this neighbourhood, to pass the evening with me; and we agreed to play a pool at commerce, in which he condescended to join himself. We were all in high spirits, more intent upon mirth, than upon our game, when my aunt's unexpected return, threw us all into great consternation. 'Tis impossible to express how extremely cross she looked; that perhaps we should not have minded, but on this important occasion she could speak, for she tartly reproved her husband for the great impropriety he had committed in teaching young people to game; and perceiving that Mr. Gillinsby and myself were the only persons *alive*, without any regard to justice, she seized upon our little pool, protesting, that the contents should be distributed amongst the poor of the parish. I do not doubt of its being thus appropriated;

propriated ; but I question, whether her own charity did not flow rather more tardily than usual, while this little stock lasted. I have observed, though her whole study is books of piety, she understands them ill, for they have not taught her much benevolence towards her fellow creatures.

'Tis natural to suppose, Mr. and Mrs. Gillinby living unhappily together, their dispositions being so very different ; but I never understood that to be the case—his feelings were not very delicate ; and though no person possesses the art of damping every rising satisfaction in others, more compleatly than herself, she could not make him feel more than a momentary vexation, for the instant he left her presence, he left care and sorrow behind. Of course, he was tempted to do this frequently ; and at last so frequently, that the poor man got into a habit of running from one house to another, drinking very hard where ever he went, 'till he drank himself to death.

No sooner had my aunt lost him, whom she had valued little, while living, than she expressed a degree of grief and regret, far beyond what her ideas of decency required, and still farther, beyond what she really felt. She has, ever since, almost secluded herself from the world ; and her disposition never being softened by social intercourse with more amiable beings than herself, is become infinitely more morose and impracticable than ever. How you can bear with it, is matter of amazement to me."

Louisa would have been better pleased with these portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Gillinby, had they been drawn by any other, than a person so nearly connected with them. Miss Sandolph's style of colour-

colouring, she thought rather harsh : she contented herself therefore with saying, in answer, that where there was nothing much amiss in the heart, defects of temper must be considered as mere infirmities, and some allowance made for them.

While this conversation had been passing in Louisa's apartment, Doctor Sandolph and his sister were conversing together. Though he knew her to be very odd, and not apt to attach herself easily, he could not doubt but that Louisa, who captivated all hearts, after passing so many months with her, had made some progress in her favour. Ever sanguine in his sentiments, he was eager to learn hers, respecting his ward ; and asked if she was not charmed with the amiable creature, he had placed under his care. " I am sure," continued he, " you feel obliged to me, for procuring you such a companion."

" She is mighty well," replied Mrs. Gillinsby, coldly.

" Mighty well !" repeated the Doctor, " and is that all that you have to say about her ?"

" Why brother, as you are so much delighted with her, 'tis unnecessary for me to say more—'tis not my way to make speeches."

" Has she been so unfortunate to displease you ? unknowingly, I am sure, it must have been, for she has an angelic disposition."

" There now brother, that is just your way ! you run on, and draw false conclusions—did I say, pray, that I was displeased with her ?"

" Why, not positively ; but you seemed unwilling to commend her."

" Because 'tis not my way to bestow extravagant praise on any body."

" Nor

" Nor do I require you should bestow more than is just."

" Aye ; but in this point, probably we shall not quite agree. The girl is well enough ; but one may easily perceive she has been bred up in a popish country."

" How so ?"

" Why, I have heard her sing prophane songs on a Sunday ; I actually caught her reading Shakespeare one evening, just after she came from church. Her employments too are mighty frivolous ; she understands nothing of family matters ; and though indeed she does assist in working at my chairs, I am sure she is not fond of needle-work, the proper occupation of her sex."

" Pshaw pshaw ! what narrow confined notions you have, sister !"

" I knew well enough how it would be—my opinion never had any weight with you—I wonder why you asked it ; and since you have taken it into your head that this girl is all perfection, it does not signify what such an old fashioned creature as myself thinks."

This was a position Doctor Sandolph was not inclined to controvert : nor did he attempt to rectify her notions concerning Louisa ; well knowing that the prejudices of little minds, so far from yielding to argument, adhere more closely to them, from the spirit of opposition. But he determined secretly to seek out a more candid, pleasant companion, than Mrs. Gillinsby, for his beloved child.

Louisa informed him of the intimacy she had contracted with the Dutchess of L. of the Duke's extraordinary visit, of his letter, and all that had passed relative to Mr. Roseville.

" I am glad you refused him ;" said Doctor Sandolph, " for I have lately had an opportunity of hearing his character fairly represented by his late tutor, a very worthy man, whose opinion may be depended upon.

I understand Mr. Roseville's disposition to be naturally amiable ; but unfortunately being an only child, the last male belonging to a very ancient opulent family, he was early (especially by his mother) accustomed to excessive indulgence, which his fond parents thought the more necessary, as his health was, and is still, uncommonly delicate. This however, did not make him insolent or overbearing ; but it enervated his mind, and made him impatient of controul. His father at last, had the resolution to send him to Eton ; but the little mortifications and disappointments he there met with, unavoidable, and perhaps, necessary to all boys, to prepare them for those which will infallibly overtake them as they pass through life, quite overwhelmed him, and he ran away from school.

But Sir Charles, who had excellent sense, insisted upon his return, and to render his situation more agreeable, as well as to secure his stay, he placed him in a private house, under the care of Mr. G. my acquaintance. There, he would have made a considerable progress in learning (for he has exceeding good parts) had he had resolution to apply to his studies. But a fatal listlessness pervaded his mind, mixed with that softness which it had contracted in infancy.

He had no idea of resisting the allurements of pleasure ; under whatever shape it presented itself, he was sure to embrace it : the consequence was,
that

that his constitution, so far from being strengthened by the manly exercises of the school, became weakened by his own irregularities.

He was besides, of such a capricious disposition, that he never made one real friend, though he had a hundred well wishers ; for he was generous and good natured.

Nobody knew better than himself, to distinguish right from wrong ; yet he got into frequent scrapes, by joining in schemes that he secretly disapproved, merely because he had no resolution to decline them.

When Mr. G. convinced him of his error, his contrition at the moment was excessive ; but it lasted no longer than that moment, and never deterred him from the commission of others.

Sir Charles, upon taking him from school, undertook to finish his education himself. Parents are generally blind to their children's faults ; consequently, he does not see that the want of energy in Mr. Roseville's character, may have the same fatal effects as a vicious disposition ; for he never would be able to struggle against any passion that took possession of his mind—his fate must be, to be ruled by others.

While he is with his father, he is secure ; but as soon as he launches into the world, he will infallibly adopt the manners of those he mixes with, whither his judgment approves of them, or not.

Such a wife as my Louisa would make, would indeed be a peculiar blessing to him ; but she deserves a man of a more dignified character, possessing firm and manly virtues to ensure respect, and yet mild and amiable, so as to engage affection,"

" Ah! who can do this ?" thought Louisa, " but Lord Danefield !"

As soon as she was alone, she indulged herself in a thousand tender regrets, that fate had thrown such obstacles between her and happiness.

Talking of Lord Danefield to Doctor Sandolph, had given fresh force to her passion; never till his arrival at Heath-hall, had she heard the charming sound of his name, and those who have loved, know full well the magical effect such sounds have upon tender hearts.

Before the Doctor came, Louisa had fancied she had cause to be dissatisfied with Lord Danefield. Though she had positively forbidden him to make any efforts to discover her retreat, she was vexed he had been so obedient to her will; and however determined she was not to listen to his addresses, she could have wished he could have found means to convince her that she was not forgotten, rather than supinely submit to his fate.

These little inconsistencies belong to human nature, and few people are entirely exempt from them. But no sooner had Louisa heard, that her lover was sequestered from the world like herself, and that he was thought to be unhappy, than she forgot his supposed flights, admired his resolution, and considering him as amiable, and suffering for love of her, she cherished the pleasing idea, that if he continued thus tender and constant, she might, some future day, be united to him; and, in the words of a favourite Poet, she softly repeated—

“ But if his love be fix’d, such constant flame
 “ As warms our breasts, if such I find his passion,
 “ My heart as grateful to his truth shall be.”

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DOCTOR Sandolph, after spending ten days at Heath-hall, was obliged to return into Shropshire; he quitted his amiable Louisa with additional regret, now that he found his sister knew not how to value her as she deserved. Before his departure, he hinted to her, that he could not consent to her passing another winter with Mrs. Gillinsby, adding, that it was very unlucky the Duchess of L. had become so warm an advocate for Mr. Roseville, otherwise her house would have been a pleasant and honourable asylum; but, said he, "do not imagine the Duchess will easily give up her favourite scheme; for though she has many amiable qualities, she has a strange perverseness in her disposition, and loves to be busy and meddling. I disapprove extremely of her conduct; but more upon Mr. Roseville's account than yours.

As for the Duke's assurance in seeking you at Woodford, it does not surprize me much; for men of intrigue are seldom troubled with delicate scruples. Your prudent behaviour will (I hope) have a proper effect upon him; and I need not observe to *you*, that whatever specious pretences his Grace may form, for drawing you into a correspondence with him, nothing must induce you to write him a line.

I am vexed that Browne (the Duchess's servant) should have been employed by the Duke;

and I think it will not be amiss when I get home, if I were to tell his Grace, that you have communicated to me all that passed."

The farewell between Louisa and the Sandolphins, was tender and affectionate on both sides. The Doctor's excellent heart, and parental fondness for her, created in her bosom a mixture of unutterable love and respect. She stood at the hall door, mournfully following with her eye, over the dreary heath, the chaise which conveyed him away. Miss Sandolph too, though she had many failings, had amused her by her vivacity; she had likewise been kind and obliging to her; and Louisa at all times felt, but especially since she had been under Mrs. Gillinsby's roof, that the soft showers of summer are not more grateful to the parched earth, than kindness to a mind depressed by neglect and indifference.

Mrs. Gillinsby, who had derived no pleasure from this visit, for she detested her niece far more than she loved her brother, could not disguise her satisfaction that silence was re-established at Heath-hall.

The arrival of the post, which brought Louisa a packet from Mrs. Raby, somewhat dissipated her chagrin. Upon opening it, she found enclosed, to her great surprize, the following letter:

To MISS ROSEVILLE,

"MADAM, *Hill-street, Aug. 10, 178—*

"Though timidity has never been considered as a part of my character, I find myself so totally subdued

subdued by it, when I attempt to address you, that nothing less than the dearest interest of my heart, could determine me to over-rule it.

Suffer me, dear and charming Miss Roseville, to lay that heart open for your inspection, and if you cannot be kind, at least be indulgent.

Sensible, from the first of my acquaintance with you, that you possessed all that women envy, and that men adore, I considered you as a being to which I had no pretensions to aspire. Soon the conviction of a mutual attachment between you and my friend Danesfield, forbade me to think of you, but as his destined wife; still, however, your lovely image would cling to my soul, and I was forced to have recourse to successive pursuits (some of which I now detest) to prevent my mind from becoming the prey of an hopeless passion.

How could it fail of acquiring strength, during a most trying scene, throughout which I saw you, with the grace and softness of an angel, administering to the relief of *her*, who instead of the watchful tenderness of a mother——But I stop my pen; my respect for you, will not allow me to enlarge upon this theme.

The delicacy of sentiment which you afterwards displayed in the renunciation of your estate, added to your heroic motives for rejecting the man who had won your heart, rivetted the soft chains that already intralled mine.

Yet pardon me, if I doubted, that a woman young, and with feelings exquisitely sensible, could have the resolution to persevere in such self-denial. My friendship too for him, would not suffer me, while there appeared any chance of your relenting, nor till time had given consistence to your resolution, even to whisper my wishes,

that you would accept the homage of a man, infinitely less deserving, but who equally loves and esteems you.

Unable any longer to keep this cruel silence, I break it with fear and trembling. Could I be so fortunate as to receive the most distant hint, that your affections were no longer engaged, and that my suit might hope to be honoured with your acceptance, I would wait with submission, though not with patience, 'till it became your pleasure to emerge from your present retirement; then, lovely Louisa, when you rejoiced us again with your presence, I would try whether the most ardent love, on my part, mixed with the sincerest esteem, together with the solicitations of your favourite Emily, could influence you to make me the happiest of men.

Nor need you (should your generous friendship for my sister make that an obstacle) be apprehensive that her children might be injured by my marrying. Their fortunes are considerable, and the additions I mean to make to them, are already settled.

Let me, at least, flatter myself, that you will pause, before you give me an answer. Consider that the happiness of Emily's brother depends upon it. At the same time, I beg you will be persuaded, I would even sacrifice *that* to promote Danesfield's, who has so much a better claim to you, than I can possibly urge. But if the same prudential reasons, which prescribed you to refuse him, weigh still with you; and if the strength of your mind has made passion subside into a tender friendship, of which no man, acquainted with your amiable principles, could be jealous,—then let me not wholly despair;—but if, alas! your
heart

heart still retains its first, or remains inflexible to a second impression, forget this presumption, and give me at least the consolation of believing, that you will, throughout life, consider me as a friend, devoted to you, and be persuaded,

Of the unalterable esteem and respect of,

Dear Madam,

Your most faithful,

And obedient humble servant,

GEORGE MELCOMB."

Louisa, who valued Melcomb extremely, felt grieved that he had fixed his heart upon her, who had none to offer in return. To be so highly esteemed by a worthy man, flattered her; and she was charmed with his delicacy, in not venturing to ground any hopes on her altered fortunes, but only on the possibility of an alteration in her sentiments: though she knew this to be utterly impossible, she did not impute it as a crime in him, to doubt of their stability.

But having no occasion for reflection, she would not keep him one moment in suspense, and therefore wrote as follows:

To GEORGE MELCOMB, Esq.

" Dear Sir,

" I should be very unworthy of your esteem, if I were capable of trifling with such a heart as yours. Believe me, I am so sensible of its worth, that were it possible mine could ever be free, (which, I confess, I do not believe) I should not hesitate where to fix my choice. But time is not
I 5 likely

likely to eradicate a partiality, founded on sympathy and esteem; and 'till I am convinced that Lord Danefield has forgotten me, I shall remain in obscurity, nor think it necessary to combat my inclination, however I may think it necessary to prevent his availing himself of it.

This frankness, Sir, is due to you, whose friendship I am proud to accept, and to whose discretion I confide the secret sentiments of my soul.

Circumstanced as I am, I cannot fail of appreciating highly the delicacy of a man, who seems to have forgotten my reduced situation, and generously forbears to lay any stress on the advantages of *his*. Indeed, Sir, you judge right; in a connection for life, merit, such as yours, needs no other recommendation to any woman worthy of your notice, and at liberty to make a choice.

I have too much regard for you, not to wish that you may deduct from your favourable sentiments of me, all that might disturb your repose; what remains, I hope, will be durable; and that you will turn your thoughts on some person, who will find her happiness in contributing to yours.

It is no small mortification to me, that I can only at a distance assure you, and your amiable sister, of my unutterable esteem and regard.

I have the honour to be,

S I R,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

Heath-hall, Aug. 13, 178—

LOUISA."

Melcomb, who knew the firmness of Louisa's mind, had followed rather the impulse of his wishes than of his hopes, when he addressed her; for he was not ignorant of her extreme partiality
for

for Lord Danefield ; nor that passion is more apt to be cherished in solitude, than in the tumult of the world.

Yet Louisa was so very reasonable, that he had sometimes fancied she might think it right, to place an insurmountable bar between herself and the man she loved ; and had she been capable of this effort, he fondly flattered himself, her esteem for him would influence her choice.

But Louisa had never, for an instant, supposed it possible she could exist for any other man than Danefield. His figure, gracefully modelled by her ingenious hands, was constantly present to her view : the few letters she had received from him, were the inseparable companions of her solitary hours ; and in spite of the obstacles which she herself had raised, she never lost sight of the distant, but delightful prospect of being united to him. An attachment such as her's, so far from enervating the mind, stimulates it to noble and generous actions. *This* gave her patience to bear Mrs. Gillimby's cold and gloomy temper, and with all the *desagrémens* of her situation. And *this* inspired her with the desire of acquiring every grace and every perfection that might render her amiable in the eyes of Lord Danefield, even if the gloss of beauty should be impaired, before their union could take place.

Mrs. Raby's letter to Louisa was as usual, full of kindness ; she mentioned having seen Lady Pompoufton ; " I forgot to tell you," said she, " that I did not visit her on her arrival in town, because I could not endure going into that wretch her husband's house, after his abominable behaviour to you. But not long since (having, as you know, been detained here all the summer, by
the

the business I mentioned) I met Lady Pompoufton at a small party; ſhe was very fine, and is really very handſome; but ſome how, I did not think ſhe had the air of a woman of faſhion, though I made allowance for the difference of manners that might prevail in her own country, which here appeared inelegant. Certainly ſhe poſſeſſes a degree of aſſurance, little inferior to that which diſtinguiſhes her Lord; and as he ſtill continues fond of her, he perſuades Lady Bridget that *ſhe* is charmed with her new nieces; but I don't believe this to be the caſe: ſhe is however not a little impatient for her nephew to viſit his Neapolitan relations, though I don't underſtand any of theſe people have taken the leaſt notice of Lord Pompouſton, ſince his marriage."

Ten days had now quietly paſſed, when Bangrove arrived at Heath-hall, with the deed of gift he had received directions to prepare. Had it been to convey away his own property, inſtead of Louiſa's, he could ſcarcely have looked more ſolemn than he did, at the inſtant he preſented it to her to ſign. Fain would he have teazed her with ſome remonſtrances againſt this meaſure, hoping ſtill that it was not irreverſibly fixed in her mind; but ſhe reſuſed to hear them.

Neither Mrs. Gillinſby, nor her manſion, were much calculated to pleaſe any body; but Bangrove, accuſtomed to the noiſe and gay ſcenes of London, ſaw both with a ſenſation approaching to horror.

"Lord, Madam!" cried he, "has that lady ſome complaint in her tongue, that ſhe is ſo very ſilent? why I could not get three words out of her, whiſt you were away, though I ſtarted a variety of ſubjects, to diſcover her taſte. Upon my word, 'tis terrible for you to live with ſuch a perſon. How
could

could you support the winter here ? such a prospect too, as that detestable heath !”

Louisa assured him, she had not found the place quite so bad as he imagined, and that she had many resources in herself.

“ That I do not doubt,” said he, “ yet I must crave pardon for saying, ’tis somewhat unaccountable, when you might be settled at Roseville with a good husband in a grand style, with a fine fortune at your command, that you should chuse to mope here by yourself, for Mrs. Gillinsby I account as nobody.”

Louisa, to quiet him, entreated that he would have no uneasiness about her, for that possibly she might remove to some other place. And Bangrove with this hope was departing for Roseville, when suddenly he turned round, “ By the way,” cried he, “ I must tell you, that Lord Danefield, who has lived ever since you came here the life of a hermit, is suddenly gone abroad, I know not where, and I cannot think why.”

Though this news made Louisa start, and spread a lively colour over her face, it made no great impression upon her mind, because she considered it, as a poor device of Bangrove’s, to facilitate his favourite scheme in regard to Mr. Roseville. And after all the news might be false, for people who delight (so much as Bangrove did) in informing themselves of the affairs of others, listen with avidity to all intelligence ; and consequently falsehood is frequently imposed upon them for truth.

With this opinion, Louisa took no notice of this speech, only her farewell courtesy was rather more formal than usual.

Two days after Bangrove’s departure, Louisa, being as usual in the evening employed in making
tea

tea for Mrs. Gillinsby, a loud ring at the gate announced visitors; so unusual a circumstance at Heath-hall, rather surprized both ladies; and the old one perceiving that it was a young gentleman well mounted, with a very smart groom attending him, naturally concluded the visit was intended for Louisa; at all events it displeased her, and she observed, that for her part, she could not think what people meant, by inviting company to the houses of others. Louisa, much amazed at this speech, protested she had not done so, and was rising to desire she might be denied: but Mrs. Gillinsby stopped her, desiring she would not teach her servants to tell lies.

The door now was thrown open, and Mr. Roseville appeared; Louisa not a little vexed, ventured however, to present him to the lady of the house, whose ungracious style of reception increased his natural shyness; and as Louisa's countenance did not wear its usual serenity, he became apprehensive that she retained some resentment for what had passed between them; all this together so totally overpowered his spirits, that he sat silent and evidently much embarrassed.

Though Louisa could well have dispensed with this visit, she pitied his distress, and enquired with a degree of interest after Sir Charles Roseville's health; it had rejoiced her, she said, to hear from the Duchess of L. that he was getting better. By this speech, she was willing to shew Mr. Roseville, that every thing had been explained.

He answered colouring, that he hoped he might flatter himself his father would soon recover, but that he was still very weak, though the physicians had pronounced him out of danger; adding, that he should sooner have done himself the honour of
waiting

waiting on her, if he could have left his father without uneasiness.

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Gillinsby, who had not yet spoken, with a significant toss of her chin.

Mr. Roseville, who was far from understanding the meaning of this exclamation, though Louisa perfectly did went on with his apologies, which Mrs. Gillinsby thinking extremely unnecessary, interrupted, by tossing the contents of a cup of tea, that Louisa had just presented to her, into the slop basin, saying at the same time, she should be very glad if she would mind how she made the tea.

Mr. Roseville stared, and Louisa disconcerted, hastened to pour out another cup. The former fancying he had perhaps been deficient in his attentions to the old lady, and thereby affronted her, wished to remedy the past; and summoning up courage, ventured to stammer out, that he had long wished for an opportunity of being introduced to such a respectable lady as Mrs. Gillinsby, and that he hoped now that Miss Roseville had done him that favour, she would sometimes permit him to have the honour of calling upon her, and her young friend.

"Miss Roseville, Sir;" said Mrs. Gillinsby, "who I suppose invited you here will———."

"No indeed, Madam;" interrupted Mr. Roseville, "I had not the good fortune to receive any invitation from her."

"Neither, Sir, shall you have the bad fortune to receive *any* from me; for young men, and old women, are but indifferent companions to each other."

"I should be happy, Madam, to convince you, that the contrary is sometimes the case. And to change

change the discourse, he observed that she had a mighty pretty garden.

"It has no great beauty;" said Mrs. Gillinsby, not in the least relaxing from her stiff forbidding air, "but I don't trouble myself at all about that, I care only about what is useful."

Roseville disheartened by his ill success, in insinuating himself into Mrs. Gillinsby's good graces, which he only attempted with a view of obtaining frequent access to Louisa, no longer importuned her with his conversation, but directed it solely to the latter. Yet constrained as he was by Mrs. Gillinsby's presence, who seemed fixed like a rock, he could only discourse on general topics.

He told her, his father had been agreeably surprized to hear she lived in Yorkshire; that he had often made unsuccessful enquiries to know what was become of her, and that if his ill health did not prevent him, he intended himself to call upon her. And then lowering his voice, Mr. Roseville added, that he could have wished, to have had an opportunity of conferring with her concerning some papers which Mr. Bangrove had delivered to Sir Charles by her desire; *papers*, he said with great emphasis, that he could not endure the sight of.

Louisa, in return said, that she was extremely sensible of Sir Charles's civility; sincerely wished the restoration of his health, and should always see him with pleasure: but that she entreated both Mr. Roseville and his father, to forbear mentioning the place of her residence to any of their acquaintance, who were not already informed of it, as she had reasons for wishing to remain unknown.

"Yet I don't find," said Mrs. Gillinsby, "that they prevent you from going to Woodford."

"To

"To explain this seeming inconsistency, madam," said Louisa, "I must observe, that I am not likely to meet there, any but a few of the Duchess's neighbours, with whom I had no acquaintance before I came into the country, and who most likely are unacquainted with all my friends. However," added she with spirit, "my motives for concealment, are not such as would reflect any disgrace upon me were they known; the consequence could only be, that my friends knowing where to find me, would not suffer me any longer to absent myself from them."

"No;" cried Mr. Roseville, with a warmth that made his cheeks glow, "*that* I am sure they would not."

And finding the evening far advanced, and that he had no hopes of speaking with Louisa alone, he reluctantly departed.

"And so, this is Sir Charles Roseville's son!" said Mrs. Gillinsby as soon as he had left the room, "he seems but a sickly youth,—Poor dear Mr. Gillinsby, would have made three of such striplings; but I am told the modern race of young men, are all pigmies.—By the way, how came you to invite him hither?"

"Why, madam, you have already heard, that I did not invite him."

"'Tis mighty odd—young ladies should be very decorous, perhaps, without expressly inviting him, you insinuated that his visits would not be very disagreeable to you."

"Pardon me, Madam," returned Louisa warmly, "I had recourse to no such insinuations; had I been disposed to cultivate Mr. Roseville's acquaintance, I should frankly have told the Duchess of L. so, who has been very anxious to prepossess me in his favor."

"My

"My stars!" exclaimed Mrs. Gillinsby, "well, I should never have thought that a young person in your situation would require solicitation (with a strong emphasis) to receive favourably, the attentions of Sir Charles Roseville's only son!"

Louisa's pride was hurt, but she determined not to give Mrs. Gillinsby the satisfaction of supposing she could mortify her, therefore she remained silent, to all appearance composedly occupied with her pencil.

But Mrs. Gillinsby's disposition was not without some little share of curiosity, therefore she wished to hear what had passed between the Duchesse and Louisa, relative to Mr. Roseville; yet not choosing to shew she had this fancy, she contented herself with departing a little from her rule of taciturnity to encourage Louisa to speak.

She began therefore, with observing, that Roseville was reckoned a fine place, though for her part she had never liked it.—Next, she mentioned Sir Charles; said, he was a man of fair character, but she lamented that he was not supposed to possess that humility of spirit, which ought to be the characteristic of a good Christian. She had had a slight acquaintance with his wife, Lady Jane, who had been dead some years, and that her ladyship, as well as herself, had often regretted the bad roads between them, which prevented still more than the distance, their being good neighbours.—"She was an admirable woman! and I am proud to say," continued Mrs. Gillinsby, "that there was much sympathy in our humours and ways of life." A poor eulogium for Lady Jane! thought Louisa.

"She was quite a pattern for others to copy," said Mrs. Gillinsby, who seemed quite warmed with

with her subject, "the cleverest woman at her needle in all England. Instead of decorating her apartment as so many do with paintings of heathen deities, popish saints, or such stuff, the hangings of her dressing-room were made of fine white callico, with the ten commandments piously stitched on them by her own fingers, ornamented with pretty emblematic devices of her own invention. The figure of a man, with an uplifted knife, prefixed to the sixth, was very finely wrought; though I have heard people more witty than wise observe, he only wanted a blue apron, exactly to represent a butcher. The story of Jezebel was very happily hit off, and of course belonged to the seventh; the rest I have unfortunately forgotten, though they were all equally apposite and edifying.

Lady Jane too, understood the management of her family to perfection; she never passed her time in frivolous occupations, like the fine ladies of the present age; but there she used to be early in the morning bustling in her dairy and kitchen; and poor lady, being somewhat fat and coarse, and not very curious in her attire, she has been more than once mistaken for the cook: but that did her no harm, for she was a most pious woman; very frugal, which her enemies attributed to avarice; a great enemy to all the flaunting idle people in her parish, and a terror to all the beggars around: and truly this, by the same malevolent people, was attributed to hard heartedness!"

Louisa quite astonished at this inundation of words from Mrs. Gillinsby, made no comments upon her discourse: and the latter having adverted to Mr. Roseville's visit without gaining the information she wished, retired to her own apartment,

ment, leaving Louisa leisure to reflect on the peculiar hardship of her fate, which seemed constantly to fix her with people, whom it was impossible she could like, and remove her at a distance from those whose disposition was congenial to her own.

And as Mrs. Gillinsby's by expanding, did not discover any latent perfection, Louisa began to think (especially if Lord Danesfield should really be gone abroad) of removing from Heath-hall.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A WEEK now passed without any thing material happening : the Duchess of L. was absent from Woodford, and Louisa had written to her friends in the convent where she had been educated, to enquire if they would admit her as a pensioner ; for after mature deliberation, to settle there, appeared to her the most eligible plan she could devise : but before she put it into execution, she wished to pay her friend Mrs. Raby a visit, if Lord Danesfield was in fact gone abroad ; this she determined first to have ascertained, that she might not be liable to meet him.

Just as she was going to write to Mrs. Raby, she received a large packet from her, inclosed in a letter from Doctor Sandolph, who approved of her scheme of exchanging her present situation for a convent, at least for the ensuing winter ; as he had not, though he owned he had for some time employed himself in enquiries, been so fortunate to discover any family quite unexceptionable, for her to board with.

Louisa next read her dear Emily's letter, which by its length promised much entertainment.

To Miss ROSEVILLE.

“ My dear Louisa,

“ I have a curious story to relate, and though I long at once to tell you the catastrophe, I will not lessen your amusement by anticipation.

I should not have been enabled to be so minute in my relation, had not Lady Bridget Wilford furnished me with an abundance of materials, merely, I believe, to vent her own vexations; and though at first you may be surprized that Lord Pompoufton chose to be so very communicative, in matters that did not redound to his credit, yet if you recollect that he as little knows to be ashamed of avowing, whatever wickedness he conceives, as she does to rebuke him, whose errors she is ever ready to excuse and palliate, your amazement will cease.

Before I mention the event, that wrung from him a full detail of all that had passed previous to his marriage, I must myself give you that detail.

I told you his acquaintance with his lady began at Bath, whither he went to dissipate the chagrin occasioned by disappointed love. I suppose he found it convenient not to play the *grand seigneur*, at that time, for he condescended to take up his quarters in a lodging house on the South Parade: he had the lower apartment, that above being occupied as he heard, by a foreign lady of great distinction, and handsome as an angel. You will easily believe he had no small curiosity to see this paragon, but opportunities were less frequent than might be imagined. The lady rose early, and was conveyed in a chair to the pump-room,
and

and as soon as she returned, she retired to her apartment, where, except an occasional airing in a carriage, she remained the rest of the day.

This mode of life she had pursued about a week, when Lord Pompouston arrived; she had brought two foreign servants with her, a maid and a *valet de chambre*, and had hired a coachman and footman at Bath.

Mrs. Shipton (the mistress of the lodging house) said, that she supposed the poor lady had no acquaintance, for no creature came near her; and her speaking very little English, she concluded to be her motive for not trying to make some.

Lord Pompouston secretly promised himself, she should not long be thus unknown; but forward as he is, he did not find it very easy to introduce himself to her. However, as at that time he stood greatly in need of amusement, he ordered his servant to be constantly upon the watch to observe *la Countess Calista's* motions, that he might see her, and judge whether she was worthy of his attentions.

He saw, and admired her. The next step was to gain her acquaintance, and for this purpose, he contrived to put himself in her way, when she was going out; and then without much ceremony he accosted her in Italian, which he understood to be her language; and with many extravagant compliments, lamented that such a beautiful lady should thus deprive the world of her presence; but if she persisted in living retired, he begged that *he* at least might profit by their neighbourhood, and be permitted to have the honour of waiting on her.

With great politeness she declined receiving his visits; but there was such grace and sweetness in her
her

her manner, as encreased his desire to overcome her objections ; and though he did not immediately succeed, he was determined to persevere.

At last he was sometimes allowed to call on his fair neighbour, but she always contrived that he should make his visits short : either she was obliged to go out, had letters to write, or was indisposed.

These short and occasional glimpses of her, charmed, without satisfying him ; for they greatly heightened his impatience to be upon a more intimate footing.

His curiosity too, was violently raised to know who, and what she was, for it appeared to him very singular, that a foreigner, young and beautiful, apparently of fashion, should come quite alone to England, without any friend or protector of either sex. To fathom this mystery, he frequently turned the conversation on Naples, and on the acquaintance he had formed there, asking her a variety of questions upon such subjects, for she might naturally be supposed conversant in, as she had acknowledged she was born there. Her answers always were very concise, containing little or no information ; for she had, as she hinted, passed the greatest part of her life in a convent ; however, he observed she preferred talking on other matters, rather than on those relative to her own country ; and what her motives were for such reserve, he could not imagine, for she remained impenetrable to his curiosity.

But Lord Pompositon had seen too much of the world, particularly of the worst part of it, not to be very prone to suspicion, and his conjectures on the *Countess Calista*, were little to her advantage.

From

From the moment that he had obtained access to her, he had, in his own mind, settled her fate; and the sequel will prove, that she had done the same, with regard to him; but her *manœuvres* were attended with better success than his Lordship's.

About a fortnight after their acquaintance had commenced, he heard an uncommon stir and bustle in the house, and upon enquiring the cause, he learned, that the poor *Countess* was in sad consternation; for that *Carlo*, her confidential servant, had decamped with a small box, containing her money and jewels; the latter, Mrs. Shipton said, she believed, must be of immense value, for that the Countess's maid had shewn them to her, and that they appeared remarkably large diamonds.

Lord Pompouston now flattered himself, that the *Countess* was quite destitute, and that she would fall into his power without any difficulty: he boldly walked up to her apartment, and earnestly begged to see her. He was admitted; and now pretending the greatest concern for her misfortune, he made an offer of his services, assuring her, that he would stir heaven and earth to bring the villain, who had robbed her, to justice; and in the mean while entreated, she would do him the honour to accept of any assistance she might want from him.

But he was much surprized to find all his offers rejected; she thanked him, however, in the politest terms; but said, as she expected her brother very soon to arrive in England, she hoped she could make shift with the little money she had left, till his arrival.

Ineffectual enquiries were made to trace the villain *Carlo*. And Lord Pomponston's zeal and friendly behaviour on this occasion, so much softened the lady, that from this period, he was frequently admitted as a welcome guest to her apartment.

But still her reserve continued; and she never suffered him to see her alone, her maid *Nanine* being her inseparable companion. Her behaviour too, was so strictly proper, that he began to entertain a higher opinion of her than he had at first conceived.

What was formerly in him, a mere fancy, was now become a violent passion; and though she feigned not to observe it, her tone of voice, when she addressed him, and her whole manner was so soft and engaging, that his heart dilated with hope. His intentions, however, were unchanged, tho' he cautiously forbore declaring them too soon. But he spoke of love, with his usual vehemence; and she appeared to listen to him with modest confusion, deferring, she said, to declare her sentiments, till her brother's arrival, and much anxiety she expressed at his delay.

Lord Pomponston secretly rejoiced at it, ardently wishing every possible obstacle might intervene to retard his journey, as nothing could interfere so much with his prospects, as the presence of her brother.

One day as he was sitting with the *Countess*, a letter was delivered to her; she started on glancing her eye over the superscription, and making an apology, hurried into her chamber, and presently after *Nanine*, who had followed her, returned with her lady's compliments, and an excuse, that she could not see him any more that evening,

evening, for that she was much out of order. *Nanine* herself looked wild and terrified, and wringing her hands, exclaimed, "ah! poor dear lady! if *St. Anthony* has not pity on her, I know not what will become of her!"

Lord *Pompoufton* eagerly asked what had happened; but she ran away, saying, her lady wanted her, and that she could not stay a moment. Upon which, Lord *Pompoufton* slipping a couple of guineas into her hand, begged she would, as soon as she could be spared, come to his apartment, for that he should not rest till he had heard what occasioned this confusion.

Nanine had found Lord *Pompoufton*'s eloquence quite irresistible—she came to him as soon as her lady had dismissed her, and after making him swear by *St. Anthony*, *St. Januarius*, and all the Saints, that he would never let her lady know she betrayed her secrets; she informed him, that the Countess's friends, people of great rank and fortune at Naples, being bent upon aggrandizing their eldest son, had placed her daughter *Calista* (her adorable mistress) in a convent, wanting her to take the veil; where she would infallibly have pined to death, for she detested the idea of being a nun, if the younger brother had not taken compassion on her. He felt the more for his sister, because he was destined for the church, to which he was as averse, as she was to a convent.

Therefore these young persons mutually agreed to free themselves from their parent's tyranny. Accordingly the young man secretly took measures to engage the captain of a vessel, that was going to *Marseilles*, to receive him and his sister on board. *Calista*, at that time, was not in her convent, having obtained permission from her

parents, to pass a few days with one of her friends, who was just married; and from her house, amidst the confusion of nuptial festivity, she found it no difficult matter to escape. *Count Antonio* (her brother) had furnished his sister and herself, with apparel to disguise their sex; but he was unfortunately prevented from attending them, by being taken suddenly ill, so he advised his sister not to wait for him, as the next day was fixed for her return to the convent, whence it would not be in his power to deliver her; and the Captain, in whom he confided, intended to sail immediately; he therefore thought she might safely depart, under the care of his faithful servant *Carlo*, whom he had discharged from his service a month before; and that his illness would prevent his parents suspecting he had any hand in her flight, so that he flattered himself he should be very soon able to follow her. And she was desired to wait for him at *Marseilles*, that they might together proceed to *England*, which, as the land of liberty, they preferred to all others.

The *Countess* arrived safe at *Marseilles*, where she waited some time for her brother; but instead of himself a letter came from him, informing her, that her parents were furious at her elopement; that he continued very ill, and was so closely watched, that he found it impossible to get away; and that he recommended to her to depart immediately for *England*, as they seemed to suspect she was in *France*; and he still hoped he should be able to join her. Above all things, he conjured her, to keep herself quite *incógnita*, when she reached the place of her destination, lest the *Neapolitan Embassador* should hear of her, and discover her retreat to her friends.

The

The *Countess*, in every respect, had followed her brother's directions: but the sickness she had suffered at sea, added to the uneasiness of her mind, had given her a violent complaint in her stomach, and a physician, whom she had consulted on her arrival in London, advised her to drink the Bath waters. Accordingly she came to Bath, where she had met with nothing but misfortunes; first, having been plundered by the traitor *Carlo*, and now having learned the fatal tidings of her brother's death.

This relation *Nanine* accompanied with tears and sighs; but Lord Pompoufion, ever wary, was doubtful what credit he ought to give to it. If he could be certain that she really was a woman of fashion, his passion was so violent, he would willingly have married her; but the apprehension of being the dupe of artful Italians, teased and perplexed him. At all events, he determined to see her, and begged so earnestly to be admitted to her presence, that after the first transports of her grief had subsided, the *Countess* consented to receive him.

He found her dressed in deep mourning, lying on a couch, with her fine hair dishevelled; and beautiful, though in tears. Lord Pompoufion, without possessing much tenderness, did not behold this sight unmoved. He tried to console her, and took this opportunity to plead his passion with more warmth, than he had hitherto done. *Calista* seemed a little revived by this proof of his love; said, she thought herself not wholly unfortunate, since she still possessed so valuable a friend, and assured him that his tenderness was balm to her afflicted heart.

Upon which Lord Pompoufton earnestly conjured her to put herself immediately under his protection; but he carefully avoided mentioning marriage.

The *Countefs*, however, pretending that she understood *that* to be his intention, after suffering him for some time to enlarge upon his love, related to him all that he had already heard from *Nanine*, and concluded with saying, that if he would take a poor fugitive for his wife, provided a priest of her own religion could be found at Bath, she would consent to be united to him.

This was by no means a part of Lord Pompoufton's scheme, therefore he begged her to accompany him to London; where it would be much easier than at Bath, to celebrate their nuptials, for that at all water-drinking places, people having little to do, delighted in gossiping; but that in the capital, nobody troubled themselves to enquire into the affairs of others.

No sooner had the *Countefs* heard this proposal, than she broke out into bitter exclamations of rage, saying, she penetrated the baseness of his views, and abhorred him for them; then, with an air of offended dignity, she commanded him instantly to depart from her sight, protesting she would never see him more.

Lord Pompoufton, obliged to retire, did not still despair; he flattered himself, that this fervour of virtue, would yield to the pressure of distress, and to his superior merit; and in the mean while, he resolved patiently to wait the event.

But he was shortly after much alarmed, by hearing from Mrs. Shipton, that the *Countefs* was preparing with great expedition to remove from Bath;

Bath ; that her English servants were already dismissed, and that a chaise was ordered to be early at the door next morning.

This intelligence perplexed him extremely—love on one side, urged him to secure her by marriage ; and prudence on the other, forbade him to think of it. Could he but have time to go to London, privately to enquire of the Neapolitan Minister the truth of those circumstances, respecting *Calista's* family and connections, of which he could not be ignorant, he should be contented ; but in the interim he might lose her, and he loved her too well to risk that : therefore, after some deliberation, he resolved to temporize.

With this view he again solicited an audience, which, with much difficulty, he obtained.

She received him with a cold haughty air, very mortifying to his pride, and at first paid little attention to his assurances, that she had misconceived his intentions, 'till he solemnly protested it was the most ardent wish of his soul to be united to her. Then she began to relax from her severity, her softness returned, she consented to his proposal, and an early day was fixed for the wedding.

Lord Pomposston instantly dispatched an express to London to one of his friends, desiring he would without loss of time, wait on the Neapolitan Embassador, and make such enquiries as he directed. But the Minister was absent, and all his friend could do was to speak to his Secretary, whose account of the family of *Calista* agreed with her own ; but he seemed entirely ignorant of the late events that had happened in it.

In the mean while Lord Pompoufton, as an accepted lover, was treated by *Califfa* with fuch infinuating tendernes, as greatly to increafe his paffion; and though ſhe frankly told him, ſhe apprehended her parent's anger againſt her would be ſo much heightened by her marriage with an heretic, as totally to preclude all hopes of fortune from them, this did not cool his ardour; and immediately after the return of the meſſenger, to remove all uneaſineſs from his bewitching *Califfa*, he procured a prieſt to marry them privately.

When once he had determined on this important meaſure, he thought it beſt to execute it ſpeedily, that the hurry of the moment might plead his excuſe to his Lady, for the omiſſion of ſettlements, &c.

As for the pompous accounts Lady Bridget Wilford gave me of the bride's family and fortune, they were invented by her nephew, who, to make her better reliſh his haſty and imprudent marriage, ſoothed her vanity with theſe tales—though he himſelf believed ſome part of them, without expecting to profit by this brilliant alliance, becauſe of the reaſons already mentioned.

You have heard of the *éclat* with which Lady Pompoufton was received by her Lord's family; and of the admiration ſhe excited where ever ſhe appeared; his paſſion continued unabated, but it did not make him neglect his intereſt. Both he and *Califfa* wrote to her family to acquaint them of their marriage, to ſue for pardon for not having ſolicited their conſent, and to requeſt permiſſion for them to go to Naples, and receive their bleſſing.

Till an answer of ſuch importance arrived, Lord Pompoufton deferred having his wife preſented

sented at court; but fond of exaggeration, he failed not to puff off to all his acquaintance the splendid expectations he entertained from this bride's relations; and Lady Bridget, during his paroxysm of vanity, which affected the whole family, frequently threw out hints, that it was very fortunate for her nephew, that he had been disappointed in his first love, otherwise he would not have obtained the charming *Countess*, so worthy of him in every respect.

You may imagine with what sentiments I heard these idle vaunts. No letters, however, arrived from Naples, and *Calista* was often found by her Lord in tears; these he attributed to her concern at her friend's neglect; he felt excessively provoked at it himself; and with as much gentleness as he could assume, he consoled her. When one day, as he was returning from the city on foot, just by Temple-bar, he espied *Carlo*, the *Countess's* late servant. Lord Pompouston made but two steps across the street, and collaring the fellow, accused him of theft. *Carlo* struggled hard to get from him; but being low of stature, and having to deal with Herculean strength, he was obliged to yield; and Lord Pompouston committed him to the charge of a constable, to be carried before a magistrate; "you had better desist," cried the fellow, with undaunted boldness, "otherwise, I assure you, you will repent it."

This exasperated his Lordship still more; and with many threats, he vowed he would make an example of him, unless he immediately confessed what he had done with the *Countess's* jewels.

The fellow smiled; "I have got no jewels belonging to the *Countess*, as you call her," said he; "she will herself tell you so; therefore, instead

of carrying me before a magistrate, confront me first with her, and hear what she will say."

The constable, who had attended to this dialogue, advised Lord Pomponston, by all means, to go first to her Ladyship, as it would be proper that she, as the injured person, should make an oath of the crime, her servant was charged with.

Lord Pomponston, who had no doubt but that *Calista* and *Nanine* would give ample proofs of his villany, acceded to this proposal; and ordered the hackney-coachman, into whose carriage they had all got, to drive to his house; where, without any ceremony, he dragged *Carlo* into the drawing room. "Here," cried he, "is that traitor *Carlo*, who impudently denies that he robbed you."—He was proceeding to abuse him, when he was struck with dismay, by perceiving, that at the sight of this fellow, who stood maliciously grinning, without speaking a word, Lady Pomponston turned as pale as death, and trembled like an aspen leaf.

"Hey day!" cried he, "what is the matter; is not this the fellow who robbed you?"

Lady Pomponston seemed unable to speak; her mouth opened indeed, but no sound issued thence.

"Why don't you speak, sister, cried *Carlo*; "give an account——"—A violent blow from Lord Pomponston prevented his further utterance. "What means the rascal," cried he? "how does he dare to call you sister?"

"He is probably mad," replied Lady Pomponston, much confused; "you had better let him go; for I believe he knows not what he is saying."

"I will

"I will make him know," cried Lord Pom-pouston, in a great rage—"Let him go, truly! fine advice indeed! But, pray tell me, whence proceeds your own confusion; did this fellow rob you, or not?"

But *Carlo* now, who began to recover, spared her Ladyship the trouble of answering, and turning towards her, with a stern look, said, "confess the truth, and suffer not your brother to be ill treated for an imaginary crime: your behaviour to me has not been such, as to induce me any longer to countenance your imposition."

"Imposition!" repeated Lord Pompouston; "what infernal plot, wretches, have you been carrying on against me? Tell me, this instant," cried he, shaking his wife by the arm, "is this fellow your brother?"

Calista was too much terrified to reply; but *Nanine*, who at that moment came into the room, alarmed at the noise, yet ignorant of the occasion, giving a loud scream at sight of *Carlo*, confirmed the unpleasant suspicions that had arisen in Lord Pompouston's breast; and he swore a bitter oath, that he would kill them all three, if they delayed one instant to explain this dark affair.

"That's easily done," said *Carlo*; "that Lady," pointing to Lady Pompouston, (who seemed half dead) "is really my sister; and this," taking *Nanine's* hand, "is *ma chere amie*. I am not disposed to entertain you with a long detail of our confederacy; suffice it to say, that we went to Bath, in hopes that her beauty would (as it had frequently done) make some valuable conquest; I condescended to act as her servant, and little *Nanine* as her maid.

The

The family, whose name *Calista* usurped, really bred her up, which enabled her to be very circumstantial in her account of them; but a little intrigue between her and *Count Antonio*, their younger son, being discovered, so exasperated her protectors, that they wanted to shut her up in a convent, but she prevented them, by flying precipitately from Naples; I and Nanine accompanied her. Her lover corresponded with her some time afterwards; and his letters (which probably she has shewn you) were such as an affectionate brother might write to his sister; he wished to follow her, but unfortunately he died not long since; had he lived, his purse would have been an ample resource to us all.

After we quitted Naples, my sister had not the folly to think herself bound to a very scrupulous fidelity to the *Count*; but she always was attentive to keep up the appearance of a woman of fashion, which she had assumed; this did not hinder her from profiting by her talents for intrigue; and the generosity of some lovers in France, added to the industry of *Nanine* and mine, furnished us with sufficient money to try our fortune in England. I had been here before, and was enabled to judge of the means most likely to impose upon the English.

Bath seemed no bad place for us mutually to exercise our talents in; and we arrived there without any fixed plan, except that of duping in general."

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Lord Pompoufton.

Carlo, with great *fang froid*, proceeded—"Your Lordship's arrival, and the account we heard of your wealth, decided our preference of *you* to try our operations upon."

Lord

Lord Pompouston, clinching his fist, was now stepping forwards to knock the fellow down, who nimbly eluding the stroke, cried, " moderate your passion, otherwise not a word more will I say—I did not wish my sister to aspire to the dangerous honour of being your wife ; she might have done very handsomely for herself without engaging you for life ; but women will have their own ways ; she had a fancy to be married, and affected to be tired of a vagrant course of life ; this partly proceeded from her having been educated in a regular elegant family. Besides, too, she longed to prove to me, that there is no project which an ingenious woman cannot execute. No small share of *finesse* and feigned reserve were necessary to gain this point, especially with you, whom she found very conversant in the ways of the world. But what may not be effected by perseverance ?

You know best what measures she took, for as for me, apprehensive that you might give me some trouble, by asking questions that I could not well answer, I thought it prudent to withdraw from the scene of action, taking with me a set of paste ornaments, which we had hired in London, to give an idea of our wealth to those, it might be necessary to dupe.

This pretended robbery, however, convinced you my sister had no interested views upon your Lordship ; and I had taken effectual methods to secrete myself from your researches.

You know the rest. *Calista* ungenerously broke her word with me ; for though she made me a present on her nuptials, it was not equal to her abilities, or my expectations ; otherwise, perhaps, I might have complied with her desire, and left the kingdom. *You*, however, have no cause to complain

complain; to you she appeared an innocent and friendless woman, yet you sought her ruin, therefore—

Lord Pampouston, whose rage had only been repressed by curiosity, could no longer contain himself, but seizing the poker, he flew at the Italian. This fellow, whose agility is not inferior to that of harlequin, again disappointed his malice; and flinging a pinch of snuff in his eyes, was out of the room, and even out of the house, before the servants knew the cause of the bell's ringing, with violence in the drawing room.

Their Lord storming with pain and fury, sent them in pursuit of *Carla*, but he was not to be overtaken, nor has he since been heard of.

Narine, in the midst of the bustle, likewise made her escape; but the wretched *Calista* remained to answer for the misdeeds of herself and accomplices; nor was her judge disposed to be merciful. In vain she made use of every art to soften his resentment, still feigning the tenderest passion for him. But his pride and vanity were too deeply offended to be appeased; and though any man would have been angry and mortified thus to have been duped, he was more implacable than any other could be.

His love now turned into the most inveterate hatred; and when Lady Bridget, who the servants sent for, arrived, she found him raving like a mad man. As she had her share of mortification in this adventure, she wished to conceal from the world the humiliating circumstances attending it; and as she thought some of them might be very much softened, and much ridicule avoided by hushing up the story, she endeavoured to pacify her nephew. But his ill humour now fell
upon

upon her, for having rendered his marriage indissoluble, by insisting on his arrival in town, that the ceremony should be performed a second time, according to the rites of the church of England.

His clamorous complaints soon spread the story, and it got into all the papers. The pity of a few, and their condoling compliments mortified him; while the jests and sarcastic remarks of others, enraged him almost to madness. After having compelled *Calista* to give him a full and complete detail of all the impositions she had put upon him, from the beginning of their acquaintance; learned from her, that the terror of detection, which perpetually hung over her, had embittered all her pleasures; that her brother's insatiable avidity had left her without a guinea; at the same time that he continually alarmed her with threats; and that she had privately intercepted the letters they had written to Naples, flattering herself, that though it was impossible she could long remain the reputed daughter of people of rank and fortune, she might, by gaining time, obtain such influence over him, as greatly to palliate her deceit, and perhaps induce him in some measure, to countenance it; after having gathered all this from her, he ordered her to retire immediately from his house; and knowing she might compel him to maintain her, he settled on her three hundred a year, upon condition that she keeps out of his sight; and with this provision, it is supposed she is gone back to her own country.

Lord Pompoufton, now quite crest-fallen, dared no longer appear in town; he seemed abashed every time he saw any of his acquaintance; and the moment he had concluded his business with

Calista

Calista he set out for his Castle in Ireland, where, I fancy, a long abode will be necessary, for many reasons; it being reported, that his affairs are deranged to a degree, which nobody had suspected.

Lady Bridget Wilford, instead of blaming his misconduct, is full of lamentations at his ill-fortune; and nothing grieves her so much, as that he has put it out of his power, by an advantageous alliance, to make himself some amends.

After having written such an enormous letter, you will excuse my adding more at present, than that I am ever,

My dear Louisa,

Your very faithful friend,

EMILY RABY."

Louisa, though extremely surprized to hear Lord Pompoufton had been so completely duped, was too noble and generous in her nature to exult in his mortification; she only wished it might lower his presumption, and prevent his attempting hereafter to disturb the peace of others.

CHAPTEE

CHAPTER XL.

IT was now the end of August, and remarkably sultry; Louisa, who felt herself oppressed with the heat, strolled out; and as there was on the common, at a little distance from the house, one solitary elm, she bent her steps thither to seek a shade, which Mrs. Gillinsby's garden did not afford. This said elm, the only tree that could be seen for miles, except a few shabby yews about Heath-hall, had a circular bench round its trunk, and hither she often repaired with a book; the vicinity of the house precluding all idea of danger.

She had taken Mrs. Raby's letter out of her pocket, to give it a second perusal, and was so intent upon this, that she did not hear the approach of a horse, 'till it was quite near her, when raising her eyes, she beheld Mr. Roseville, but so pale and altered, that she could not help (with a degree of earnestness, that flattered him) enquiring what was the matter with him.

"I am excessively ill, indeed," said he, applying his hand to his forehead; "yet I should scarcely feel my pain, if I thought you felt concerned for me."

"Then," cried she, with a smile, "your pain must already be gone; for I can see no person suffer, without great concern."

"Ah! general pity will do me no good; it must be particular concern for me."

"Why should you expose yourself to this fervid sun?" said Louisa.

"Because

"Because I could no longer exist, without seeing you ; but I suffer most cruelly," continued he, with a faint voice ; "I was ill when I left home ; and galloping fast over this vile common, has affected my head very much—I must alight—Perhaps, Miss Roseville, you have some salts—Oh ! my head !"

Louisa, much alarmed, assisted him to sit down upon the bench, while he gazed at her with a stupefied look ; and resting his head against the tree, held her salts to his nose.

"What can I do for you," cried Louisa ; "I'll run home and fetch some drops."

But he seemed not to hear her ; and growing infinitely worse, his sight failed him, and he scarcely breathed. Louisa terrified more and more, attempted to move ; this roused him, and he gave her to understand, that he felt as if he had burning coals on his brain, but he spoke very inarticulately.

Louisa, convinced that he required immediate assistance, was greatly distressed how to act ; he had come without a servant, and she could not think of leaving him in this condition. But she had not much leisure for reflection ; for on a sudden Mr. Roseville gave a piercing shriek, and rolled senseless off the bench.

Louisa, scarcely knowing what she did, ran to the house, and gasping for breath, called wildly for assistance, without being able at first to make the servants comprehend her meaning. At last pointing repeatedly to the common, and crying, "fly there ! fly quick ! he will die else !" they ran out, and one of them had the presence of mind to carry some hartshorn.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gillinsby hearing a bustle, made her appearance, and Louisa hastening to her, told her what had happened ; by this time her flurry had a little subsided, and she entreated her to send instantly for a surgeon, adding, that she really believed poor Mr. Roseville was dying.

Mrs. Gillinsby listened to her with great composure without speaking a word ; but Louisa, who was all animation, when her pity was excited, could not endure her phlegm.

" Oh ! Madam," cried she, " for God's sake, send for a surgeon ; perhaps bleeding may recover him."

" What brought him here, pray ?"

" Indeed, I don't know. But is this a time," said she impatiently, for explanations ?—I see they are bringing him towards the house ; I hope he is better."

" My stars !" exclaimed Mrs. Gillinsby, bringing him here indeed ; what would you have me do with him ?"

" My God !" cried Louisa, " can it admit of a doubt, that you will receive him ? Is a man's life to be lost for want of assistance ?"

" O no ; to be sure not. But suppose his disorder should be of the putrid kind, terrible consequences might follow his coming here ; and surely you would not wish me to run any risk."

" No, certainly ; but as the case is urgent, let him stay 'till a proper conveyance can be got to remove him to Roseville."

Mrs. Gillinsby, with an ill grace, assented. A bed was prepared, and a surgeon sent for. Louisa, with wonderful alacrity settled every thing, helped herself to get the room ready for Mr. Roseville's

ville's reception, and with reviving hopes saw that he was not totally insensible.

His servant whom he had out-rode now arrived, and Louisa sent him back to Sir Charles with a note, written in terms of great caution not to shock him suddenly; but at the same time hinting that as he would probably choose to come immediately, and judge himself of his son's situation, it might be advisable to bring a physician with him.

While Louisa was dispatching this business, Mrs. Gillinsby had shut herself up in her apartment, to avoid, as she said, the possibility of infection; and she was almost afraid of admitting Louisa there, lest she should already have imbibed some malignant particles by her attendance on Mr. Roseville. Louisa found her at work as composed as if nothing had happened, with little other solicitude than that which regarded her decker-work bed, which she earnestly recommended to Louisa, to have her eye constantly upon, otherwise the servants would certainly soil and dawb it, with the slops carried to the sick man.

Louisa heard her with astonishment, and was scarcely able to conceal her indignation, that such trivial concerns should at that moment occupy her thoughts. Indeed, she had often with sorrow observed, how very little Mrs. Gillinsby understood the spirit of that religion she so zealously professed. Neither the pressure of distress, nor the pains of malady in others, ever induced her to step beyond the narrow limits she had prescribed herself: if a fire had burst out in the parish, and every house in it had been in danger of consuming, provided the wind had not set towards Heath she would have continued unmoved at her studies;

dies; and strange to tell, those studies were always books of piety!

The surgeon being arrived, was of opinion, that the intense heat of the sun striking almost vertically upon the head of Mr. Roseville, had occasioned those alarming symptoms which had appeared; and by the application of proper remedies, he flattered himself that he should shortly give him ease.

The intervening hours that passed before Sir Charles could arrive, Louisa spent in his son's room, or in one contiguous to it, occupied in seeing the surgeon's directions punctually obeyed by Marianne, and an old woman she had sent for from the village; for most of Mrs. Gillinsby's servants, though better disposed towards the sick man than herself, were either employed by her, or forbidden to approach Mr. Roseville for fear of infection; and those who were not under his prohibition were too awkward to be of any use.

Much attendance however was necessary, for Mr. Roseville, so far from finding any relief by the methods employed by the surgeon, became from hour to hour infinitely worse: and in this sad condition he was found at midnight by Sir Charles, who had been obliged to wait some time for the physician whom he had brought with him. This gentleman had been accustomed to attend Mr. Roseville, and had long considered his health as in a very precarious state; he had strongly urged him for some time to go abroad and try the effect of a warmer climate; but Mr. Roseville had shewn great reluctance to this measure; however, at last, wearied out by importunity, he had almost determined upon it, and this had made him so desirous

desirous once more to see Louisa, before he gave his father an absolute promise of departing.

The physician's countenance, more than his words, as soon as he had felt Mr. Roseville's pulse, completed the consternation, which had seized on Sir Charles when he first beheld his son; who stared wildly about him, talking very fast, and wholly insensible to what was passing.

Sir Charles, grieved as he was, did not forget to express his gratitude for, and admiration of, Louisa's attentions, bitterly lamenting his son's imprudence, in having exposed himself to the fervid rays of the sun; and at the same time heating his blood by violent exercise.

"You were certainly," said he to Louisa, "destined to be both the father and son's guardian angel! what would have become of him in this desolate place, had he not fallen into such humane hands!"

Louisa disclaimed all merit for the part she had acted. But the surgeon, who had beheld the indefatigable activity, the presence of mind, and forethought, which had directed her humanity, regarded her with enthusiasm, as something more than mortal, and expressed his sentiments accordingly.

Louisa, now judging her presence no longer necessary, retired to her chamber, and extremely fatigued, sought rest; but her mind had been so much agitated, she could only obtain it imperfectly. As for Sir Charles, he could not be prevailed upon to quit his son's anti-room, where he rested extremely ill.

The morning agreeably flattered all those who interested themselves in Mr. Roseville's recovery, that it would take place; his fever was less violent,

lent, his head seemed somewhat relieved, and occasionally a dawn of reason appeared ; but still, the physician did not look satisfied.

No material change happened in the course of that day, nor in the night following. And Sir Charles, more and more elated with hopes (which Doctor F. without entirely repressing, endeavoured to prevent becoming sanguine too soon) became very impatient to get his son removed from Heath-hall.

Mrs. Gillinsby indeed, thinking some respect due to such a guest as Sir Charles, did, in defiance of her fears, venture to make her appearance in the parlour below ; but her civility was evidently so constrained, her looks so cold, and in the enquiries she made after Mr. Roseville, she seemed so unconcerned, and even ignorant of what answers she received, that Sir Charles, whose affliction and anxiety needed all the balm that sympathy and tenderness could bestow, and to whose proud and generous spirit, the littleness of Mrs. Gillinsby's, her insensibility, and ridiculous apprehensions, were as inconceiveable as odious, considered his son's confinement to *her* house, as a great aggravation of his misfortune.

Nor could Louisa fail of being of his opinion ; for Mrs. Gillinsby, standing less upon ceremony with her, gave herself no trouble to disguise her vexation, at the confusion and irregularity which had invaded the tranquility of her family, hourly prognosticating the shocking consequences which must infallibly ensue.

Doctor F. sensible of the dissatisfaction that his patient's stay created in all parties, gave Sir Charles hopes, that if Mr. Roseville did not get worse the third night, he might the next morning be transported

ported in a litter to Roseville; and towards evening, the young man seemed getting better; he knew all those about him, recollected where he was, demonstrated the most lively satisfaction in seeing his father by his bed-side; and earnestly desired, that he might be permitted to see that angel, of whose kind officious care in the beginning of his illness he still retained a confused remembrance.

Doctor F. who quickly perceived how much his patient was interested in this request, would not deny it; but he stipulated with him, that Miss Roseville's visit should be short, and that he should content himself with seeing her, forbearing all conversation till his fever abated.

Louisa, though she had forborne personal attendance on Mr. Roseville since his father's arrival, had never remitted superintending the servants, that nothing of consequence might be neglected; and whenever Sir Charles was not in his son's room, she sat with him, kindly soothing and consoling him.

The moment she heard that her presence was desired, she hastened to Mr. Roseville's room. As soon as she approached his bed-side, he took her hand, and pressing it to his burning lips, "may you be happy, lovely angel, and as good as lovely," cried he, "whatever be my fate! I have long been ill—worse than people have imagined—my disorder seems now drawing to a crisis; and should it be, as I expect, let me, Sir," turning towards his father, "recommend this angel to your protection. She would not—I am now glad she would not be my wife; for with what fortitude then could I have submitted to my fate!

fate! but all gentle and amiable as she is, surely she cannot refuse to be a daughter to you."

Louisa's tears flowed fast—"you will live, my dear Sir," cried she, "and be to your father all he can wish—compose yourself, and trust in God for your recovery."

The physician now appeared at the door, and peremptorily beckoned to Louisa to retire.

But Mr. Roseville detaining her, said, "one word more before we part, perhaps for ever! this stroke," continued he, "falls heavy upon a mind unaccustomed to pain, and enervated by pleasure and indulgence. Alas! an early rage for pleasure, even in my boyish days, undermined my constitution—and were I to live, I could now scarcely be happy; for my mind has lost all vigour, and yields, without resistance, to every impression. But still, in the prime of youth, to see the cold dark grave opening to receive me; to be torn from the best of fathers, from all the gay hopes and brilliant prospects I had indulged, would overwhelm a man endued with far more fortitude than I can pretend to: however, had you, Madam, shared in my griefs and disappointments, they would have been still more poignant. Once more let me, as a dying man (which I firmly believe I am) conjure you not to forsake my father—I well know the consolation he would find in your attentions. Ah! spare them not, where they will be so much wanted!"

He paused; for a few moments silence prevailed; but Mr. Roseville, making an effort to speak, in spite of the entreaties of those round him, said, in a voice, scarcely audible, "be not thus afflicted, my dear father! receive the tender and affectionate thanks of your son, for all the

care and kindness you have shewn him. May God Almighty! who doubtless for the best, thinks fit to take me from you, support you throughout this trial! This amiable creature," continued he, taking Louisa's hand, "has experienced, young as she is, the uncertainty of all earthly blessings. It would be worthy of you, my dear father, to reward her merit; restore to her the estate she nobly and generously surrendered; cherish her as your child, (Heaven could not have given you a more deserving one) she will supply my place, sooth your sorrows, and I hope, in time, dry your tears."

Then again, tenderly kissing Louisa's hand, "Go, amiable Miss Roseville," cried he; "go; this scene affects your gentle nature. May that Being, who is full of goodness and mercy, protect you!"

And with an expressive look, he placed her hand in his father's, who had for some time been unable to speak; and who now interchanged with Louisa a glance of tender woe, and then the latter retired.

After this melancholy scene, Mr. Roseville had a terrible night, and was in the morning so much worse that all thoughts of removing him were laid aside. He continually talked of Louisa, when he had the power of utterance, strongly recommending her to his father's protection: and Sir Charles solemnly assured him, that if it were his misfortune to lose him, an event which he still endeavoured to persuade himself would not happen, that he would adopt Louisa for his child; and this assurance seemed to tranquillize his son.

Principles of religion had early been instilled into Mr. Roseville's mind; and though they had
not

not always influenced his conduct, he had never greatly swerved from them, and now in these awful moments, they rendered him resigned to his fate.

The pain in his head, which he had constantly complained of, increased to a violent degree; but his patience was wonderful, and could not have been expected from a person of his disposition. By degrees, he became weaker and weaker, till all sense of feeling forsook him; and on the fifth day of his illness, he expired.

No language is adequate to describe Sir Charles Roseville's agonies, when he saw his beloved son, the only hope and pride of his family, breathe his last! no feeling mind can think, without shuddering, of the grief and cruel disappointment of a parent, who had watched with tender solicitude over the infancy of a child, seen with heart-felt exultation its faculties gradually expand, assisted their maturity by the most liberal education; and then, when he found his endeavours successful, and that the little bit of wax he had moulded to his fancy, was now become an intelligent being, capable of feeling the attentions that had been shewn him, and desirous of returning them by every mark of filial love and respect; in such a moment, to see this beloved child drop like a blighted fruit—

“ From the first blossom, from the buds of joy;

“ Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves

“ In this inclement clime of human life.”

Ah! none but a parent can imagine what exquisite misery this must be!

CHAPTER LXI.

POOOR Sir Charles hung speechless over the remains of his son, not a tear dropped from his eye ; for the consolation of weeping is denied to excessive grief. Louisa, now devoted to the father, the attentions she had shewn the son : she went to him, and instead of using common place arguments to assuage his sorrow (which would have been totally disregarded) she enlarged in the most pathetic language on the greatness of his loss, and on the merits of the departed youth. So tender and touching was her eulogy, that at last it melted the parent's heart, and he burst into tears. This was the relief she had been anxious to procure him, and she mingled her tears with his.

Then gently leading him from the sad contemplation in which he was engaged, she reminded him of the promise she had made to his son ; and kneeling down on one knee, she took his hand, and protested, in the sight of Almighty God, that it should be the study of her life to pay him every attention, and every mark of filial love and respect, that a daughter could shew a father.

Sir Charles, softened by her tenderness, pressed her hand to his heart, then abruptly breaking from her, he motioned, with his hand, that he must be left alone.—Louisa obeyed.

For twelve hours Sir Charles remained shut up in his apartment, lamenting with tears and heart-rending sighs his misery. All at once he recollected that he had given no orders in regard to the
remains

remains of his son, and he suddenly emerged from his retreat, that every necessary preparation might be made for carrying them with suitable dignity to Roseville, there to be laid in the family vault, with those of his ancestors.

Doctor F. though other physicians had been called in, had very humanely continued almost during the whole time of Mr. Roseville's illness at Heath-hall; he was still there, and had anticipated Sir Charles's orders.

The latter now determined to set out instantly, and calling for Louisa, "I rely," said he, "on your promise; desert not an unfortunate old man; bear me company in my affliction, and be to me a daughter."

"Do you wish, Sir," cried Louisa, "that I should accompany you to Roseville? I am ready to do it, if you choose."

"Come then," said Sir Charles; "quit this house of horror, and the unfeeling mistress of it, for ever. Come, where you will be considered as the gift of Heaven, where you will be cherished with paternal fondness—This was the request of my poor dying boy!"

He paused, the tears trembled in his eyes, and with an altered voice, he added, "you will find at Roseville two worthy good creatures who reside with me, the vicar of the parish, and his wife; the company of the latter will be comfortable to you; for in me, alas! you will find a wretched companion!"

Louisa immediately went to Mrs. Gillinsby, who had been extremely vexed and discomposed at the late event, not much from the soft emotions of pity and concern, but because it happened in her house. A thousand disagreeable reflections

she deduced from it ; and amongst the rest (as she was very superstitious) no small degree of terror, lest Mr. Roseville's ghost should henceforth haunt the room in which he died.

Louisa, after making many apologies for Sir Charles, and acknowledgments for the favours he had received, informed her, with great politeness, that she was under the necessity of quitting her, as he had most kindly and generously invited her to live with him. That she should not forget her goodness, in having afforded her an asylum so long, and that she regretted their separation should be so sudden.

Louisa perceived, by the working of her mouth, that she was extremely displeased ; and she was thinking what methods she should take to conciliate her to this measure, when Mrs. Gillinsby said, "'tis not my way to speak much ; but you must excuse me, Miss Roseville, if I think your behaviour to me abominable. You prefer every body to me. I dare say you never even hesitated, in granting Sir Charles's request ; for I have long seen, that nothing here is good enough for you."

Louisa, unwilling to retort her asperity upon her, said, with great mildness, that her principal motive for going to Roseville was, if possible, to impart some consolation to an afflicted parent, who flattered her, with an assurance that it would ; and therefore, without meaning her the least disrespect, she had consented to go.

" Fine specious reasons !" cried Mrs. Gillinsby ; " but do not imagine you impose upon me, for I see through your schemes well enough."

" My schemes, Madam !"

" Yes,

" Yes, your schemes, Miss ; but, perhaps, you may be disappointed yet ; and with all your arts, Sir Charles may be too cunning for you."

" I will hope, Madam," said Louisa, colouring with resentment, which however she endeavoured to subdue, " that anger alone occasions you to hold such language ? for I will not suppose that the sister of my worthy friend, Doctor Sandolph, can seriously design to insinuate, what it is beneath me to notice."

" My brother is another of your dupes ; but I had sufficient penetration very soon to read into your character."

" Good God, Madam ! how have I merited this treatment ? To please and oblige you, has been my constant endeavour,"

" As you say. However, don't let me detain you. I beg you will go, and prepare to attend your new friend. I think I have heard, there was a time when he took no notice of you ; but wonderful changes are brought about, with a *little* management !"

Louisa durst not trust her temper any longer, and silently courtesying, was going to retire ; but Mrs. Gillinsby stopped her, to desire she would, the moment she was settled at Roseville, send for all her clatter, as she called her piano-forte, books, &c. not being disposed, she said, should she wish to return, to be made her convenience a second time.

" Nor shall I, madam," said Louisa, with spirit, " be disposed ever to trouble you again."

" You will, I suppose," cried Mrs. Gillinsby, smiling bitterly, " write to my brother, and tell him whither you have taken yourself. And I too shall write and give him a piece of my mind."

Accompanying these last words with a threatening shake of her head.

Louisa, without minding her malice, hastened to attend Sir Charles, leaving Marianne behind, to prepare her baggage for a speedy removal.

It will easily be imagined, how melancholy a journey she had to Roseville. Sir Charles sat absorbed in grief, which increased as he drew nearer home. Louisa was too much affected by it, to bestow any attention on the place she was going to inhabit.

Mr. and Mrs. Stephens (the vicar and his wife) appeared at the hall door to receive them. Their countenances at once indicated their honest hearts, and the part they took in their patron's affliction.

To them, Sir Charles entrusted Louisa. "I am myself," said he, "incapable of doing the honours of this house; but observe, that this young lady is considered and treated with the same kindness and attention, as if she were my own daughter. Henceforth her will is a law here. Let all my servants be commanded to obey and respect her as their mistress."

Mr. and Mrs. Stephens performed Sir Charles's injunctions, with a zeal and alacrity that marked not only their deference for him, but likewise the goodness of their own hearts. Mrs. Stephens, without having studied the rules of politeness, was guided to them by an instinctive principle, which never misled her; and after having conducted Louisa to the apartment allotted for her, and seen her properly attended to, she left her to her repose.

Louisa's first care, the following morning, was to write to Doctor Sandolph, to inform him of
what

what had happened, and of the step she had taken in consequence, which, she flattered herself he would approve; but she delicately forbore mentioning Mrs. Gillinsby's behaviour.

Sir Charles, during those days that passed before his son's funeral, remained retired in his apartment, where he admitted none but his servant. But when the tolling of the bell announced the awful ceremony which was at hand, he came forth, and no persuasion could prevent his attending it.

Louisa had put herself into a sister's mourning, and when Sir Charles perceived her, he seemed charmed with this mark of respect. He behaved to her with the utmost tenderness, begging her to consider herself at home; to do exactly what she liked; and, for the short space of time he should survive his beloved son, allow him to compensate to her, as far as lay in his power, for the misfortunes of her past life.

Louisa, whose proud and independent spirit had resisted all Sir Charles's offers, as long as she could suspect that either pride or pity had induced him to make them; now, that she was convinced, that by her acceptance, she not only gave ease to his mind, but likewise enabled herself to cheer his afflicted heart by her soft and lenient attentions, gratefully accepted all his favours, judging of his disposition by her own, which knew no luxury equal to that of obliging.

As soon as the violence of Sir Charles's grief had somewhat subsided, he sent Mrs. Gillinsby a magnificent present, of such things as he imagined would be most acceptable to her, and he liberally rewarded her servants, though little trouble, in the late calamity, had fallen to their share.

His next solicitude was to re-convey Cherrydale back to Louisa, and make some other arrangements which regarded her ; for these purposes, he sent for Bangrove, who heard, with the greatest amazement, the extraordinary change which had taken place in Louisa's situation.

Sir Charles, who knew, that since the discovery of the flaw in the birth, she had scrupled to sign herself by the name of Roseville, among other directions which he gave Bangrove, desired he would take the proper measures to give her an indisputable right to a name which, he had long since thought, she would grace. And Bangrove, when he restored her the title-deeds of the estate in Kent, with other papers necessary for her to have, sent her a licence he had procured in the usual form, for her to take, and bear the name and arms of Roseville.

Louisa, who had, immediately after she was settled comfortably at Roseville, imparted to Mrs. Raby the events which had happened, was now authorized by Sir Charles, to invite her and Mr. Melcomb to his house, and the former most joyfully accepted the invitation.

Nothing could be more tender and affecting than the meeting between these charming women, and even Sir Charles, whose heart had been inaccessible to pleasure since his sad loss, felt a transient gleam of joy break through the surrounding gloom. Mrs. Raby entirely forgot in this happy moment, the displeasure she had conceived at Louisa's retreat ; she was extremely struck with the improvement in her person ; her beauty indeed was enchanting, because it gave the most perfect idea of the union of sense, grace, and sweetness.

After

After a thousand fond enquiries had been interchanged, Louisa, blushing, asked why Lord Danefield had renounced the mode of life he had adopted, and gone abroad? Mrs. Raby protested she did not know; that his resolution had been as suddenly taken, as executed; that he did not even call upon her; nor did he see Lord William S. but the moment he had obtained of his Colonel, leave to travel, he set out for the continent, and that Lord William had informed her, he had only heard from him once, and then he was in France, undetermined where he should fix.

Louisa secretly flattered herself his absence would not be long; her union with him, she no longer considered as a romantic vision, but as a most probable event; and this idea made her more than ever grateful to the goodness of Providence who had supported her with fortitude amidst all her trials, and now surrounded her with innumerable comforts. With such delightful hopes as she now entertained, she could not be insensible to the satisfaction, of being the declared heiress of a man of immense property: and proud and generous as was her disposition, she was incapable of harbouring any petty resentment; therefore, when she returned her visits (for all the people of fashion in the neighbourhood came to see her,) the first she made was to Heath-hall. Mrs. Giltinsby received her very sullenly, seeing in her prosperity only fresh reason to inveigh against the caprice of fortune.

Sir Charles had not forgotten the hint Louisa had formerly given him of her affections being engaged, and as he wished nothing more than to promote her happiness, he was desirous of know-
ing

ing to whom. Amiable and deserving he was persuaded the object must be, or he could not have made an impression on such a heart as Louisa's; and if want of fortune had been the obstacle between them, *that* was in his power, as well as inclination to overcome. To talk with Mrs. Raby (who, he was certain, possessed Louisa's entire confidence) on this matter seemed most agreeable to delicacy; and accordingly he took an early opportunity to sound her upon it. She made no scruple to give him the information he wished.

Though Lord Danefield was personally unknown to Sir Charles, he was not ignorant that he was spoken of in the world, as a young man of distinguished merit; his birth, rank, and connections were such, as would have gratified his ambition, had he a daughter to marry; and to him who valued family far above fortune, the slenderness of Lord Danefield's, was no material objection; especially, as he had a very large sum of money in the funds, nearly sufficient to disengage the Danefield estate from the incumbrances with which it had been loaded by the late lord; and as he had no male relations, and the females of his family were all married, and in affluence, he was of opinion, that he could not dispose of his property with more credit and satisfaction to himself, than by bestowing it as a reward of merit, and to restore to a very noble and ancient family, the lustre it had formerly enjoyed.

This generous plan somewhat diverted his thoughts from the melancholy reflections which had of late pressed so cruelly upon them; the next consideration was, *how to execute it.*

Neither

Neither Mrs. Raby, nor Louisa, knew whither Lord Danefield was gone. To the latter, Sir Charles gently hinted his design, and she listened to him with blushing delight. Quite superior to all disguise, and proud of the object of her regard, she frankly acknowledged, the happiness of her life depended upon him; gratefully, and yet without departing from her native dignity, expressing her thanks for his noble intention.

As Doctor Sandolph, by means of his connection with Lord William S. might be able to gain some intelligence of his friend, and whether he still retained his former passion for Louisa, Sir Charles resolved, since the Doctor could not then come to Roseville, as he was confined with the gout, that, as soon as Mrs. Raby returned to London, (which she was obliged to do in about a fortnight,) that he and Louisa should go to Stretly.

Nothing could delight her more, than the idea of paying her very venerable friend a visit; and the proposal coming from Sir Charles, was such a proof of his solicitude to please and oblige her, as made her heart overflow with grateful tenderness.

One morning as Mrs. Raby and Louisa were sitting together at work, the Duchess of L. was announced. Louisa, agreeably surprized to see her, flew with alacrity to the door, and the Duchess affectionately embraced her. Some complimentary messages had passed between them, but they had not met since they separated at Heath-hall. Louisa introduced to her Grace, Mrs. Raby, and after some general conversation, the latter retired.

Amidst the Duchess's satisfaction at seeing her, Louisa perceived that something rested upon her mind;

mind ; nor was she mistaken ; for no sooner were they alone, than the Duchess said, “ I have something to communicate to you, that perhaps I am to blame to have withheld so long ; but I could not bring myself to mention it sooner, for reasons which you will easily guess.”

Louisa, somewhat alarmed at this preface, impatiently waited the sequel, and the Duchess continued.

“ During the time that I was entirely engrossed by the schemes I had formed, of bringing about a match between you and poor Roseville, some business, relative to my nephew, called me suddenly to London, where I only staid three days. My house in town opens into the Green Park, and, from my window, I perceived Lord William S. to whom I have been ever partial, and I could not resist this opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with him, not having seen him since his return from his travels ; so, taking my key, I joined him.

Scarcely had we expressed our pleasure at meeting, when a young officer passed us, exchanging a nod of the head with Lord William. I was much struck with the elegance of his figure, and conjectured that he belonged to the Danefield family.”

Louisa coloured and started, but the Duchess, without pretending to observe it, proceeded.

“ For there are certain characteristic traits, and a remarkable sweetness of countenance, peculiar to all those of that blood. I found by Lord William, that I was not mistaken ; as he soon after presented to me the young officer, by the name of Lord Danefield, his most intimate friend.

After

After a few turns, the later left us, and Lord William came home with me to dinner. I could talk of nothing but Lord Danefield."

"That is not surprizing," thought Louisa.

"Such charming manners, such an appearance of good sense, joined to such manly beauty, I scarcely ever saw equalled."

Louisa's cheeks flushed with modest pleasure.

"Lord William," continued the Duchess, "listened to my encomiums on his friend, with delight." "Would you believe, madam," cried he, "that there exists a young lady, who, tho' not insensible to his merit, from motives of frigid prudence, has refused him, and concealed herself in some obscure retreat, which all his researches have been ineffectual to discover."

Some circumstances which Lord William mentioned, added to the recollection that I had seen, in your apartment, a clay model extremely like Lord Danefield, convinced me you were this cruel fair one; but being at that time possessed with a belief that Mr. Roseville, for obvious reasons, was the best match in the world for you; and having besides an ardent desire to see you established in my neighbourhood, I cautiously forbore to let Lord William read my thoughts.

Perhaps had Lord Danefield not despaired of finding you, he would not have left the kingdom, which I understand he has done; and since Fate forbade the union I wished, I really lament, most sincerely, that I was so reserved about you."

Louisa secretly lamented it likewise; but she re-assured the Duchess, saying, that as her Grace had promised not to betray her secret, she had no cause to reproach herself, for having kept it.

During

During dinner, it was accidentally mentioned, that the Roseville family were going into Shropshire. Louisa perceived that the Duchess sighed, and changed colour; and when she was taking leave of her, she pressed her hand with an expressive look of sorrow. "You are going," said she, "to a part of England, whither all my wishes tend; you will see with indifference a man, whom I cannot think of without emotion. What would I not give, invisibly to be of your party!"

"And why invisible," cried Louisa, struck with an idea, that perhaps some method might be hit upon to soften the Duke's obduracy, if the Duchess went to Stretly; suppose your Grace were to honour us with your company, I think I could answer that it would be highly agreeable both to Sir Charles and Doctor Sandolph."

"Good God!" exclaimed the Duchess, "are you serious in this proposal? Have you considered that my presence at Stretly would certainly frighten the Duke from his house?"

"I will not imagine that possible; though at first it may be prudent for you not to appear, 'till your friends have felt their way a little. However, my dear madam, consider this matter maturely; for my part, I think some good might arise from your being so near his Grace."

The Duchess, in great agitation, promised she would think of it, and the result of her reflections, was a resolution to accompany them to Stretly.

Sir Charles never objected to any thing Louisa proposed; and the latter apprized Doctor Sandolph what guests he might expect.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLII.

MRS. Raby tore herself, with reluctance, from the sweet society of her beloved Louisa; but maternal love hurried her to town, and she departed with the less regret, as it was settled, that if no circumstance carried them to London sooner, that certainly, after Christmas, Sir Charles and Louisa should pass some time there.

The welcome the latter received at Stretly from Doctor Sandolph, was such as might be expected from an honest benevolent heart overflowing with joy. Next to the sight of his beloved child, none could, at that time, be so pleasing to him, as that of her benefactor.

Miss Sandolph too was unfeignedly glad to see both; and the Duchess was received with a sentiment more flattering to her than respect; for it was with cordiality, and a hearty wish, that her long and faithful attachment to her ungrateful wandering lord, might at last be rewarded.

It was determined that the Duchess, under pretence of indisposition, should keep much in her chamber, except at hours, when she might be certain not to meet any strangers. Thus Louisa would have leisure to communicate their scheme to Lady Caroline S. whose concurrence in it they wished to engage. The servants at the parsonage, in the mean while, were to be kept ignorant of the Duchess's name and rank.

The

The first moment Doctor Sandolph was alone with Louisa, he informed her of Sir Charles's enquiries concerning Lord Danefield.

"I had anticipated his wishes," said he, "for having learned that his Lordship had taken a small house near the lake of Geneva, I desired Lord William to mention to him your change of situation. I concluded," continued he with a smile, "that I need not lose time, by waiting to consult you. I hope no foolish delicacy, on either side, will now interfere, and that at last I shall have the comfort of bestowing your hand on the only man I know deserving of it."

Louisa seemed not in the least dissatisfied with the Doctor's officious care; and her thoughts now were employed in calculating the distance of Geneva from England.

The Duke with his brother and sister, called at Stretly, the day after the arrival of the Roseville family.

Lady Caroline and Louisa were delighted to renew acquaintance, and Lord William was happy, at length, to see a person, whose beauty and merit had been so highly extolled, and who was besides adored by his dearest friend. Louisa's behaviour to him was such, that had he thought it possible any woman could forget Lord Danefield, sufficiently convinced him she could not.

He therefore ventured, when none could overhear him, to speak of his friend with that enthusiasm peculiar to youthful minds, when their friend, or their mistress, is the topic. The complacency of Louisa's countenance, and the soft tone of voice in which she replied to him, made him almost envy the happiness that was in store for Lord Danefield.

The

The Duke too had unusual cause to be satisfied with her reception of him ; and though he had for some time quite despaired of being with her on the amicable footing he wished, he thought himself happy to be favoured with a transient smile.

As Louisa had the success of her project very much at heart ; and as nothing could conduce more to this, than to put the Duke into good humour, she spared no pains to please him. Therefore, when his Grace proposed to shew her some improvements he had made on his terrace, offering to lend her a horse, she consented to take a ride with him and Lady Caroline, and the next morning was fixed for this purpose.

Sir Charles preferred a solitary stroll in the Duke's gardens to riding, and Miss Sandolph remained with her uncle.

The weather proved remarkably fine, and the Duke, in great spirits, proud of displaying his taste, and charmed with his companion, pointed out to her the alterations he had made, and what he further projected.

Louisa well remembered the beauties of the terrace ; a soft melancholy dwelt upon her mind ; for under the spreading oak before her, she had first listened to the tender tale of love, which Danefield had so sweetly told. This oak was now on the eve of being despoiled of its leafy ornaments ; the touch of autumn had changed its verdant hue into a bright yellow, intermingled with red ; but still it was beautiful, and Louisa could not pass it without stopping. She therefore proposed that they should alight, and wait for Lady Caroline, who had lingered behind.

Close

Close to this interesting tree the Duke had built, what he called a *gazebo*, because this spot commanded the finest and most extensive view of any part of the terrace.

Scarcely had the Duke assisted her to dismount, than he exclaimed, "Good Heaven! what do I see? A tablet suspended to one of the branches of the oak!"

He ran hastily to unhang it, bringing it to Louisa, and they read these lines:

"Or negletta, e schernita, e in abbandono

"Rimasa, segue pur chi fugge, e sprezza."

"Ed in quel punto in me sorge un talento

"Verso di lui sì dolce, e sì gentile,

"Che di seguirlo, e di pregarlo ancora,

"E di scoprirgli il cor prendo consiglio."

And on the reverse these:

"O cease then coldly to suspect my love;

"And let my deed at least my faith approve."

"Did your Grace ever see these lines before?" said Louisa, while the Duke stood pensive, with an altered countenance.

"No," returned he; "and assuredly these quotations are written by the Duchess of L. I cannot mistake her hand-writing." "tell me, truly," cried he, after pausing an instant, "did she not send this by you?"

"No, indeed;" replied Louisa, "yet, I am persuaded, her sentiments are not very dissimilar to these. But remember, my Lord Duke, that
Henry,

Henry, after severely (and I think ungenerously) trying the love of Emma, treated her with the tenderness she observed."

The Duke attended to her with an absent air, and muttered half to himself, "I know not what to think—this tablet," turning towards Louisa, "amazes me; and there are moments, in which I am inclined to believe the Duchess is still partial to me, and even to wish she were; and then I condemn myself for the supposition."

"Ah, doubt it not!" cried Louisa, warmly, "be generous; banish from your mind all recollection of past animosity, and restore your heart to an amiable woman, who, as I have before told you, passes her life in lamenting your unkindness."

"Charming Miss Roseville!" cried the Duke, "what would you have me do?"

"Perform the solemn engagement you made at the altar; do justice to the person you have wronged."

"But while you condemn me so severely, do you suppose your friend has been blameless?"

"I will not presume to say so; for in all disputes between married persons, there are generally faults on both sides: but if the Duchess has ever erred, surely she has suffered sufficiently by your neglect, to atone for it; whilst you, Duke of L. (excuse this freedom of speech) have passed your days in a course of thoughtless gaiety."

"Do you really suppose that I should be happier, re-united to her?"

"Certainly; because you would experience the sweetest satisfaction in the world, the consciousness of bestowing happiness. Besides too, I imagine, a time will come, when you yourself must find your chief comforts in domestic life.

Lady

Lady Caroline, amiable as she is, has never yet been able entirely to surmount the afflictions of her youth, nor does she ever willingly quit the country. The Duchess's disposition is naturally chearful, her pride and pleasure would be, to become your constant companion; and her riper judgment now, would teach her what measures to avoid and what to pursue, to secure your mutual tranquillity."

"If the Duchess were now here," cried the Duke, "she would find me, dear Miss Roseville, much softened in her favour. I believe indeed, I have been unjust to her."

"That's nobly said, my Lord," cried Louisa; "and the same generous disposition which prompts you to condemn yourself, will incite you to make reparation. I should be sorry to appear officious, or meddling; but I own I wish your Grace to encourage these symptoms of returning love. I have lived much with the Duchess, know that she has innumerable good qualities, and have invariably found, that a reconciliation with you, is the predominant wish of her soul. Why then, my Lord Duke, since you seem not averse to it, should it not take place?"

"I will consider of it," said the Duke, "not only to oblige you, and my family, who warmly desire it, but from a conviction that it ought to be; yet the first steps in a business of this nature, are extremely awkward and humiliating, and I cannot readily resolve to make them."

Louisa, who thought reflection very dangerous in this case, and that all chance of success depended upon pushing her point, at a moment when the Duke already shewed some symptoms of tenderness, exerted all her eloquence to compleat
he

her work ; and at last induced him to promise that he would immediately make propositions to the Duchefs for an accommodation.

" How joyfully ſhe will receive them ! " cried Louiſa, " ah ! be aſſured ſhe will not hesitate to fly to you, the moment ſhe is convinced you wiſh ſhe ſhould."

" Then," ſaid he, " we ſhall not long be ſeparate. When I ſaw her laſt, I was extremely affected ; but then I ſhruggled for indifference: now, I am diſpoſed to cheriſh and encourage re- viving love."

At that inſtant, a female form, ſwiftly gliding from behind the *gazebo*, exclaimed, " is this poſſible ! may I give credit to theſe delightful words ? "

The Duke ſtarted, and ſeemed petrified with amazement ; but the Duchefs (for it was her) dreading, leſt ſhe had been too precipitate, ſeemed ready to ſink, and leaning againſt the building, ſaid, in a faint voice,

" O Heaven ! what have I done ! pardon I entreat, this attempt ; 'tis your wife, your wretched wife, who ſues to you for reconciliation ! "

" She cannot ſue in vain," cried the Duke, recovering from his ſurprize, and from the oppreſſion of conflicting paſſions ; and haſtening to her, he preſſed her to his boſom.

" I have been unkind to you," cried he, " as ſoon as his emotion would ſuffer him to ſpeak ; " I have been unjuſt and obdurate."

" Say not ſo, my dear Lord ! " cried the Duchefs, ſhedding tears, " you knew not how I loved you ; and I had many failings. Let us both forget the paſt, and mutually exchange forgivenefs."

" I aſſent

"I assent most cordially," said the Duke; "and be it the study of our lives hence-forward to render each other happy. But you look pale; let me lead you to a seat."

"Ah!" cried the Duchess, "I am ill indeed; it is the effect, partly of apprehension, that you would be offended, and that my scheme would fail; and now 'tis joy that overcomes me.—But," continued she, "where is that amiable creature, to whose soft pleading I am so much indebted? I cannot be easy 'till I have poured forth my acknowledgments to her."

Louisa had retired to a little distance; but perceiving her company was desired, she approached the *gazebo*.

"She is an angel of peace!" cried the Duke, "this is not the first attempt she has made to serve you."

The Duchess received her with open arms, tenderly embracing her; but neither spoke.

"May that blessed Providence which has reunited you," cried Louisa, with an honest fervour, that both affected the Duke and Duchess, "make you so perfectly happy in each other, that the event of this day, may be the most delightful of all remembrances!"

At that moment, Lady Caroline S. who had purposely lingered behind, arrived, and cordially embraced, and congratulated all parties.

The ladies had concerted the plan of surprizing the Duke suddenly, with a sight of his Duchess, after Louisa had made an endeavour to soften him in her favour. The suspended tablet was the Duchess's own idea, and had the effect she wished.

Lady

Lady Caroline and Louisa now thought of returning home. The reconciled pair insisted, that not only the latter should promise for herself, but engage all the family at Stretly to dine that day at the castle. Doctor Sandolph, they said, might easily be wheeled there in a chair; for the remainder of this happy day, they devoted to joy and festivity.

The Duchess had walked to the terrace, by a short cut, and the Duke, excusing himself from attending the ladies on horseback, accompanied the former on foot.

Lady Caroline therefore hastened to the castle, naturally concluding, that her brother and sister, would rather loiter in their walk; and that she should have time to order some little preparations suitable for the occasion.

The servants were apprized that their lady was coming; some remembered and loved her; others, who knew her not, were indifferent under whose command they were, having no other solicitude than what concerned their own interest; but the spirits of all were exhilarated with the prospect of feasts and rejoicings.

Lord William S. met the Duke and Duchess at the door; and with his usual good humour, took part in their joy. The servants too crowded in the hall, impatient to be distinguished by some mark of their lady's favour.

Sir Charles would not, by an ungracious denial, shew, that he preferred the indulgence of his own sorrows, to witnessing the joy of others; as for his participating in it, otherwise than by good humour and smiles, was utterly impossible; for when his only son expired, all innate chearfulness for ever forsook him.

Doctor Sandolph and Louisa, on such an occasion, went with unusual satisfaction to the castle.

An elegant entertainment was prepared. The day passed in social pleasures, and concluded with a brilliant illumination, contrived by Lady Caroline S. agreeably to surprize the Duke and Duchefs, who saw the initials of their names in cypher, with suitable mottos, formed by small coloured lamps.

Lady Caroline and Louisa, delighted with the happy *denouement* of their scheme, had now only to wish, that the present harmony of the reconciled pair, might never again be disturbed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

LOUISA secretly longed to return to Roseville, as she might now any day expect to see, or hear from, Lord Danefield; and the crisis of her fate seemed approaching.

Sir Charles, whom nothing but a strong affection for Louisa, could have induced to undertake this journey, having fulfilled the object of it, was very impatient to get home, and two days after that from which the Duke and Duchess hoped to date the æra of their felicity, he and Louisa left Stretly: in the present state of her mind she was less than usual affected at parting with her venerable friend, and she had the satisfaction of leaving the Duchess one of the happiest of beings, and of carrying with her, the thanks and good wishes of every part of that family.

The first question Louisa asked on her arrival at Roseville was, whether there were any letters for her, and she was told only one, that the postman had just left. The sight of it threw her into an agitation, which was not a little encreased on seeing the hand writing; hastily flying with it to her apartment, and shutting herself in, though almost sick with impatience to know the contents, she was so much flurried that she had scarcely power to break the seal; at last, she read what follows:

M 2

To

To MISS ROSEVILLE.

Geneva, October 15, 178—.

“ Thank Heaven ! my dear Madam, your retreat is no longer unknown to me. At length I have learned whither to address my tender wishes. O ! may you deign to be propitious to them ?

Could I but express half the torments I have endured, since you so cruelly concealed yourself from me, your gentle bosom would heave a sigh, and you would almost repent the cold prudence that induced you thus to afflict me.

But away with past griefs ! my heart is now dilated with hope ; for my charming, my adored Louisa, has now no plea to oppose to my passion.

Common minds, perhaps, may suspect that your opening prospect of wealth, influenced the renewal of my addresses. But *you* are incapable for a single moment of harbouring such a thought, and I disdain it with my whole soul.

I certainly rejoice that Sir Charles Roseville has rewarded your noble behaviour to him : fortune could not be better bestowed than on you, whose soul glows with the most generous and benevolent sentiments ; and Sir Charles, on this occasion, has ensured to himself the approbation of the whole world.

The circumstance which best pleases me in the restoration of your fortune is, that the only obstacle you yourself raised between us, no longer exists.

But had you continued destitute, to have called you mine, would have gratified all my wishes ; for in you, is comprized all happiness.

Think

Think with what impatience I shall await your answer ! alas ! a twelvemonth has passed, without your condescending to honour me with the least notice ! perhaps ! ——— but I will not suffer that thought to intrude ; however, I dare not venture into your presence 'till I receive some encouragement.

Tell me then, beloved of my soul, that I am at liberty to throw myself at your feet, and personally assure you of the unalterable esteem, tenderness, and respect of

Your faithful and devoted servant,

DANEFIELD."

Delicious tears now bathed Louisa's cheeks : assured of Lord Danefield's love, she felt herself relieved from all her anxious doubts ; her past sorrows were all forgotten ; and she considered with ineffable delight, her future prospects. Then hastily taking a pen, she wrote as follows :

" After having so long, my Lord, submitted (because I thought your tranquillity required it) to the suspension of all intercourse between us ; I will not dissemble to your Lordship, the pleasure I feel that such restraint is no longer necessary.

Be assured that you have not suffered alone ; but surely to have nourished in you sentiments, which prudence had decreed should be subdued, would have been the height of cruelty : however, I have not been free from solicitude about you, nor have I neglected any opportunity of enquiring after you.

With the sincerest satisfaction I learned the æconomical plan you had adopted ; and why should I hesitate to avow, that I never dismissed the pleasing hope, that a time would come, when

you might be enabled to marry according to your inclinations.

The prospect of wealth would afford me a very imperfect satisfaction, if it were not a step to the attainment of an object infinitely more valuable. But when I consider it, as the means of removing those difficulties with which you are hampered; then indeed, fortune becomes to me a most inestimable blessing. Ah! Danefield, to feel the delightful consciousness that I can make you easy and happy, leaves me without a wish ungratified!

During many unpleasant scenes, through which I have passed since I parted with you, my spirits, next to my reliance on the Divine Providence, have only been supported by the idea of your faithful regard.

After this unreserved declaration, 'tis needless I trust to add, that I wish to see you; Sir Charles Roseville too, (the kindest and most generous of friends) longs to become acquainted with you.

You love and respect him, for he has been a father to your Louisa.

His delicate attentions to promote my wishes in every respect, are such as I never can return.

You, Lord Danefield, will assist me in soothing his sorrows. Alas! they press hard upon him: this task will not be irksome to you, who feel so sensibly the misfortunes of others.

I will not thank you for the justice you do my sentiments; for I should blush to think any sordid motive could actuate either of us. Fortune is only a convenience; whether it favours you or me is immaterial, because neither could enjoy it without sharing it with the other.

Sympathy,

Sympathy, esteem, and tenderness, have ever been, and will ever be the only bands that unite our hearts. Adieu!

LOUISA ROSEVILLE."

Louisa communicated to her friend, Sir Charles, Lord Danefield's letter; and he not only approved of it, but wrote a few lines himself to his Lordship, inviting him to his house, and expressing the highest esteem for his character.

A month now passed not calmly, for as the time approached when Louisa might hope for Lord Danefield's arrival, her spirits were in a tumult: anxious expectation disturbed her repose, and she was quite unqualified for her usual avocations; though she constrained herself to appear composed before Sir Charles, who never experienced any abatement in her attentions.

The various talents she possessed, she employed to cheer the spirits of a man, exhausted with mental and bodily pain: his health had long been declining, and the loss of his son had struck a fatal blow to his enfeebled constitution. Yet, though insensible to joy, his heart was penetrated with gratitude for Louisa. Every reason endeared her to him;—she had been loved by his son, who had in the tenderest manner recommended her to his protection:—she had shewn the most generous and disinterested principles in her behaviour to himself, to him, who had formerly seen her, through a medium of narrow prejudice;—and now, on her alone he depended for that small portion of comfort, that his wounded mind could receive.

Some degree of surprize, mingled with uneasiness at Lord Danefield's delay, began to harass Louisa; but when a fortnight more had passed

without her even hearing from Geneva, all gaiety forsook her. Something dreadful must have happened, and her imagination was painfully busy in conjectures, from which she was at last disagreeably relieved, by a few lines written in a strange hand, to say, that Lord Danefield had desired she might be informed, that an unfortunate accident detained him at Geneva; that he was somewhat indisposed, but hoped shortly to be able to give her a better account of himself; should not have alarmed her with this, had he not thought the knowledge of a misfortune, a less evil than suspense; in the mean while he entreated her not to be uneasy about him, as he was under the care of very humane skilful people.

This letter seemed written by his servant; and poor Louisa, full of sorrow and dismay, hastened with it to Sir Charles, desirous of receiving from him, the consolation which her own thoughts refused.

Sir Charles could only grieve with her, and was as incapable as herself, of imagining what accident this could be, that so cruelly detained Lord Danefield; but both concluded the indisposition to proceed from it. Louisa bitterly lamented that she was not his wife, and at liberty to fly, and tender her services to this beloved object.

She had however little leisure to brood over this sad news, for the day after it arrived, a most afflictive event, filled her with alarm and consternation.

Sir Charles was struck with the palsy, which affected his intellects, and deprived him of the use of one side. Louisa immediately sent for his own physician, and others equally eminent; but they gave her no hopes of his recovery, though they said he might linger some time in this deplorable

able

nable situation : all she could now do, was to enforce their prescriptions, tenderly watch in his chamber, and smooth, as much as possible, the bed of sickness.

Her peculiar fate had led her frequently into similar scenes ; her vocation seemed to be, to nurse the sick ; and never did she appear more lovely than under these circumstances. Such sweet attention, with a deportment so quiet and gentle ; such indefatigable patience, with anxiety so tender ; such vigilant prudence and forethought, with so much fortitude in extreme youth, were almost unparalleled.

Mr. and Mrs. Stephens were now of great use, not only in their attendance on Sir Charles, (who had at intervals, just sufficient perception of what was passing, to like to see his friends about him) but likewise in supporting Louisa's spirits, cruelly assailed almost at the same time, from different quarters.

Mrs. Stephens was of a mild obliging disposition, tender hearted, and perfectly honest and well-meaning. Mr. Stephens had qualities not dissimilar, with an understanding that perhaps naturally, might not have been superior to his wife's ; but which having been improved by a better education, rendered his conversation far more pleasing than hers.

His morals were pure, and he himself practised the piety he inculcated, endearing himself to his parishioners, by every good office in his power.

Mrs. Raby, as soon as she heard of her friend's melancholy situation, would have gone to her immediately, but her children were under inoculation, and she could not quit them.

Doctor Sandolph was ignorant of what had passed, for as soon as he had recovered from the gout, he set out on one of his long rambles, and the time of his return was uncertain.

Louisa had now been a fortnight in a state of the greatest anxiety about Lord Danefield, to whom she wrote in a style, that could not fail of delighting him. She had somewhat recovered from the shock she had received at Sir Charles's sudden seizure ; his case seeming remediless, her affliction, which at first had been very acute, had now sunk into a quiet commiserating sorrow.

About this time she was a little comforted by receiving a few lines written by Lord Danefield, though the contents of his letter were grievous enough.

He briefly told her, that an unruly horse had nearly been his destruction ; that he had thrown him amongst some flints, in an excursion he had made to the *glacieres*, to charm away the time that must pass, before he could hear the decision of his fate from her ; that besides some shocking contusions, he had the misfortune to break his leg, and that he was still, and should be for some time longer, confined to his bed. That the disappointment this accident had occasioned to those charming hopes she had allowed him to entertain, flung him into a fever ; but that (though still ill) he was now rather better, and flattered himself, many weeks would not pass, before he should be in a condition to travel. In the mean while, he solaced his imagination with the delightful prospect of future happiness ; happiness, which she alone could confer : and he concluded with the most fervent expressions of love and gratitude.

The

The correspondence once renewed, was punctually kept up; Lord Danefield's recovery, however, did not keep pace with his wishes, and happiness still seemed at a distance. Sir Charles continued much in the same state; one day better, the other worse.

But Lord Danefield, refractory to his physicians, would quit Geneva, when he was still very weak; he had got as far as Paris, suffering greatly during the journey, and he ardently entreated Louisa would allow him to go to Roseville, that his felicity might be secured.

But as the cold weather sensibly affected Sir Charles, threatening his speedy dissolution, Louisa begged Lord Danefield not to think of fatiguing himself unnecessarily by hurrying to England, but rather to stay quietly at Paris, and think only of restoring his health; for, said she, "a short time, I fear, will deprive me of poor Sir Charles, and it would be a strange disregard of decency, to give you my hand in this house of sorrow. I sincerely hope Heaven will restore my friend; but should it be otherwise, I have perfect confidence, that I shall find in you, my dear lord, the kind friend and protector I lose. Assured of my invariable regard, you will, I trust, cheerfully submit to this delay."

Louisa had scarcely dispatched her letter, when Sir Charles grew so much worse, that it was evident he could not last many days. Fortunately at this juncture Mrs. Raby arrived; her presence supported Louisa's fortitude through poor Sir Charles's closing scene. Death, to a man in his condition, cannot rationally be considered as an evil, but rather as a happy release; it came too unattended with horror, in the form of sleep: this event happened on the 15th of January.

Louisa

Louisa, though in constant expectation of it, was nevertheless much affected; she would not quit the house, but staid to see every mark of respect paid to the remains of her friend.

Bangrove, whom she immediately wrote to, hastened to obey her summons, as well as Doctor Sandolph, whose own affairs had hitherto prevented him from coming to Roseville. That worthy man's pious reasoning, and kind soothing greatly calmed her mind.

Bangrove, who on his arrival had bowed lower, and craved pardon oftener than ever, now produced Sir Charles Roseville's will, which had been deposited in his care.

The will only confirmed a settlement he had made before, of all his property on Louisa; a certain sum excepted, which he devised in legacies; the most considerable were, two thousand pounds to Mr. Stephens, and one thousand pounds to Bangrove, as the old confidential friend of the family; which last Louisa doubled.

Louisa, in Bangrove's opinion, was now a person of infinitely more consequence than he had ever before thought her. In the midst of his sorrow for the loss of his patron, to whom he had been attached from his youth, he could not forbear exulting at the admirable condition in which she would find Sir Charles's affairs, entirely owing, as he said, to his excellent management.

His officious disposition was pleasingly gratified by the business that now devolved upon him. He was full of cares, schemes, and projects, to enlarge an estate, already sufficiently considerable to satisfy all but inordinate avarice; nor was he without solicitude, as to her future disposal of it. Some little hints he could not refrain from dropping, in favour of such of his clients, as he thought of
wealth

wealth and consequence to pretend to her. But he soon found *this* was not the way to gain her good graces; and he prudently determined to think only of the advancement of his own interest, without troubling himself to find her a husband.

Louisa, having with his assistance arranged her affairs at Roseville, and requested Mr. and Mrs. Stephens to continue there as long as might be convenient to them, resolved, in a few days, to follow Mrs. Raby, who had just left her, and take possession of Sir Charles Roseville's house, in Grosvenor-street, London; where Lord Dane-field was daily expected, had now every thing to recommend it; the latter had been apprized by Mrs. Raby, of the late events, and the friends had calculated, that he would be there almost as soon as themselves, as the last letter brought the most pleasing account of his health.

Before Louisa left the country, she sent Mrs. Gillinsby a present, which she knew would be invaluable in her eyes. This was a set of hangings for a large room, with all the furniture compleat, of very curious old fashioned embroidery. At sight of this treasure, Mrs. Gillinsby, on whom Louisa's sweetness had made no impression, felt a sensation which, from its novelty, she scarcely knew how to define, so little was her heart accustomed to glow with gratitude, or to experience any delight in the prosperity of others. But just at that moment, she began to doubt, whether Louisa had not more merit, than she had hitherto allowed herself to believe; and she even condescended to write her a note, in the most obliging terms she could imagine.

Doctor Sandolph now left his beloved child, promising to see her very shortly in town: he carried

ried with him a draft for both the principal and interest of the money, which he had (not without inconvenience to himself) formerly presented her with; and his chaise was loaded with presents, which Louisa sent his niece. She had some time before, repaid Mr. Melcomb the money he had paid for her mother.

Most of the time Louisa had passed in Yorkshire, had been marked with gloom, chagrin, or painful anxiety; she quitted it therefore with no other regret than what related to Sir Charles; but she was not insensible to the worth of Mr. and Mrs. Stephens, whose kindness she acknowledged as it deserved; nor was she unmindful of requiting, most liberally the late Sir Charles's domestics, who followed her with clamorous lamentations to the chaise which conveyed her from them.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLIV.

EVERY step the horses made, seemed to lighten Louisa's heart; she flattered herself she had left care and vexation behind; not that she ceased to regret Sir Charles with tender sensibility, but her heart beat quick with the thoughts of the pleasure that awaited her in London.

Throughout the journey she had built castles in the air, adorning them with all the graces of a lively imagination. The image of her beloved Danefield was always predominant in her mind; she anticipated the joy, and agreeable hurry of spirits, that would attend their first meeting; next, the calm delicious moments, when each should have leisure to recount to the other, events interesting to both; and concert together schemes for the future.

What exquisite delight she felt, to be enabled, by Sir Charles's munificence, to prevent almost every wish of the man she adored! without him, what pleasure could her riches give her! but enjoyed with him, they would indeed be a blessing! a thousand benevolent schemes she had to propose to him. Why should they not revive old English hospitality, and diffuse on all, within their reach, a part of their own happiness? their house might be an asylum for people of taste and genius, who had not, like them, experienced fortune's favours.

Mrs.

Mrs. Stanford, Lord Danefield's sister, might now be made easy and affluent; her husband pushed in the army, and some provision made for her children.

Occupied with these ideas, she allowed herself little time for repose, that she might the sooner reach town.

She arrived there about three o'clock, when passing through Oxford-street, a man, with a large bundle of brooms crossing the way just before the horses, they took fright, and ran with such speed, that the post-boy, unable to contain them, or to keep his seat, was with violence thrown on the pavement; and presently after, by good fortune, a cart coming along, blocked the horses passage, and they stopped.

Louisa and Marianne, half dead with fright, jumped out of the chaise, and to their inexpressible satisfaction, found the post-boy had escaped (miraculously) unhurt; for he had fallen on some straw, which had been scattered before the gate of a livery stable.

Louisa's terror, however, had disordered her exceedingly; a giddiness seized her, and she found herself ready to faint; in this situation she leant against the railing of a small neat-looking house.

A servant maid, whom curiosity had brought to the door, seeing people gathering about our heroine, asked her to step into the house; and she was glad to accept the offer. The maid conducted her into an empty parlour, where there was no fire. The weather was excessively cold and sharp; and Louisa, pale, shivering, and still giddy, sat down.

But in an instant, the maid returned, accompanied by a very pretty woman, with water and drops,

drops, who, in the most polite and engaging manner, requested her to go up stairs, and warm herself thoroughly by a good fire, which she would find in her drawing-room.

Louisa, who was in fact half frozen, readily, and with many thanks, consented. The stranger led the way, and they entered a very neat apartment.

But, what a surprize awaited her ! before the fire lay a large Pomeranian dog, which she directly recognized to be *Mouton*, the great favourite, and constant companion of Lord Danefield ! he knew her instantly, and came and fawned upon her. How he came thither, she could not divine ; but it was impossible to be mistaken in him, for his size rendered him very remarkable, and besides, he acknowledged her as an acquaintance.

She now attentively surveyed her companion, whose blushing face was averted from her. Why she should seem embarrassed, and how she came in possession of this dog, seemed very singular. Yet a timidity, she could not conquer, prevented Louisa's asking questions, she was dying to have resolved.

The more she considered the stranger's face, the prettier she thought her ; her figure, indeed, was partly covered by a long muslin cloak, and it appeared but indifferent. The dog had very composedly resumed his station on the hearth ; and Louisa, whose perplexity every moment increased, to be satisfied that he really belonged to Lord Danefield, called *Mouton* ! and instantly he came and placed his head on her lap. She stroaked and caressed him almost mechanically ; for she was conjecturing where his Lord could be.

“ My

"My dog, madam," said the lady, "has taken a fancy to you, and answers to the name you have been pleased to give him."

"Is it not his own, madam?" said Louisa; "surely, he is my old acquaintance; and if you will not think me impertinent, I should be glad to know how he came to be yours."

"He was given to me by——by a relation," replied the lady, with some hesitation.

"That relation, surely is not unknown to me."

"Pardon me, madam, I believe—I think you could not have known him—he has been many years abroad."

"Many years!" repeated Louisa, "then indeed I must be mistaken."

No reply was made—Louisa too was silent; but her mind secretly refused its assent to the belief, that this dog was no other than *Mouton*. The lady, who sat twirling the corner of her cloak, at last made an attempt at conversation; but it would not do, and Louisa rising to go, the former said, with an air, that denoted anxiety to be believed,

"I do assure you, madam, you are mistaken about this dog."

"Perhaps so;" said Louisa, drily, and still unconvinced, "I thought he belonged to—a friend of mine." And she coloured as she spoke; and her penetrating eyes observed, that her companion did so likewise, to a violent degree.

The stranger coldly asked her to stay, 'till she had procured some conveyance to carry her home; but Louisa said, her servant could soon get a chair, (not choosing to trust herself again in the chaise) and it was ordered directly.

'Till it came, she resumed her seat, longing to know the lady's name, yet not venturing to ask it.

The

The chair being ready, Louisa courtesied; and the lady having seen her to the stairs, retired. But before the former had got further than the landing place, she recollected having left her salts on the table, and ran back to fetch them.

As she opened the door, she heard somebody hurry away; but not so expeditiously as to prevent her just catching in an opposite pier glass, a transient glimpse of Lord Danefield's figure!—*That* she could not mistake, and what her sensations were, cannot be described. Her own amazement however did not prevent her observing that her return had exceedingly disconcerted the lady, who asked with an impatient air, what had happened.

"I know not, madam," faltered Louisa, scarcely sensible of what she was saying; her eye fixed on that fatal door which she had just heard bang to; but recollecting herself, she pointed to the bottle of salts, and taking it, retired without speaking a word, or even remembering to apologize for her intrusion.

The chairman stood with his hat in his hand, waiting her orders, but she was so absorbed in thought, and *that* so agonizing, that she did not notice him, or any other object. But Philip, her servant, whom nothing disturbed, directed him whither to go.

What could carry Lord Danefield to the house she had just left, was a question she repeatedly asked herself. On her arrival in Grosvenor-street, she found Marianne, who had ventured home in the chaise, busy in arranging her luggage, assisted by her other servants, who she had sent some days before, to air the house and prepare for her reception.

Marianne

Marianne transported with joy to see her dear mistress in possession of a comfortable dwelling in London, was chattering at a great rate, desiring her to look at this, and settle that : but Louisa's pallid countenance soon checked her loquacity ; and with tender anxiety, she asked, if she still found herself ill—Her lady shook her head, and motioned her to depart. Her dinner was now served, but not a morsel could she eat, feeling as if she had a lump in her throat.

Recollecting however, that poor Marianne would worry herself with an apprehension that she was angry with her, she sent for her, and spoke to her with her usual sweetness, which entirely dissipated the chagrin she had given her.

“ Pray,” said Louisa, “ did you notice the house we went into this morning ; had you any conversation with the maid ?”

“ As for the house, I can't say,” replied Marianne, “ that I saw much of it ; it seemed a common lodging house, for I saw a bill on the parlour window ; and the lady you saw, madam, with a man and a maid, are lodgers in it.”

“ Did you hear her name ?”

“ I think it is either Bellenten or Bellenden ; the maid said her mistress had only been there a week.”

The arrival of Mrs. Raby, (who had been apprized of Louisa's arrival) put an end to this conversation. With open arms she flew to embrace her ; Louisa returned her salute ; but engrossed by her own vexatious thoughts, she sunk immediately after into the chair, without speaking.

“ Good Heaven !” exclaimed Mrs. Raby, looking at her with anxious alarm, “ what is the matter ? Why, my sweet friend, do you look thus coldly at me ?”

“ Indeed,

" Indeed, my dear Emily, I am not cold to you," faintly articulated Louisa.

" What then has happened ? Are you ill ? Speak, I conjure you."

Louisa, affected by Mrs. Raby's kindness, hid her face in her bosom, and bursting into tears, I scarcely dare tell you what cruel thoughts torment me," cried she, " yet—an odd, a perplexing circumstance, that happened to me this morning, gives me doubts—"

" Of what, of whom ? Surely not of Danefield ?" eagerly asked Mrs. Raby.

" Yes ; of Lord Danefield."

" Impossible ! What malicious lie have you heard ?"

" None. But I am most strangely deceived, if I did not see him this morning at—"

" No, no ; he is not in England."

" Hear me patiently," cried Louisa ; and then she related what had happened.

" Well," cried Mrs. Raby, " and is this all that has discomposed you ? May there not be two dogs in the world alike ? and, prepossessed as you were, that this lady's dog was *Mouton*, upon seeing the glimpse of a figure in a glass, your fancy gave him that of Danefield."

" But why should this woman colour, and appear embarrassed ? Why should my unexpected return disconcert her, who had at first been so engagingly polite ? And lastly, what occasioned the bustle I heard of some person scuddling away, as if afraid of being seen ?"

" It is impossible I can account for all this satisfactorily," returned Mrs. Raby, " unless I could ascertain what part fancy had in it. This lady might have reasons to be discomposed, which
may

may be of no consequence to you ; and the person with her, might have *his* for choosing concealment. Yet, it does not follow that this man was Lord Danefield. However granting that it was actually himself you saw, might not some innocent motive have carried him thither ? Surely, upon such slight grounds, you should not suspect his fidelity. Remember the story of Lucy ; appearances then, were much more against him than they are at present."

" 'Tis true ; and I am willing to flatter myself he is innocent," said Louisa ; but certainly it was singular, to find him (for I have no doubt of the identity of his person) at a time when his friends were ignorant of his return, at a very pretty woman's lodging, and to know that he aimed at concealment."

" So you are convinced it was him ?"

" Could I have mistaken his person, which I don't think very probable," returned Louisa, " *Mouton* could not have mistaken me ; for dogs have better memories than human creatures ; and never forget their old acquaintance ; nor would he have answered to a wrong name."

Mrs. Raby herself, somewhat staggered in her belief of Lord Danefield's being still absent, but yet perfectly free from all suspicion injurious to him, could only recommend to her friend to tranquillize her mind, and not suffer its serenity to be disturbed by vague and probably unjust surmises. " When you see him," said she, " candidly mention the circumstance, and I will lay my life that he explains it satisfactorily."

Louisa secretly pleased at Mrs. Raby's implicit reliance on Lord Danefield's love and faith, found herself

herself much calmed; and just as they were beginning their tea, a servant announced Lord Danesfield.

To describe Louisa's sensations, at that instant, is utterly impossible; for various conflicting passions agitated her at once. At his approach she arose; but her trembling knees obliged her instantly to sink again into her chair, and her power of respiration almost forsook her; while he, apparently not much less agitated, but wild with delight, fondly threw his arms around her, and though she made an effort to prevent it, he strained her to his breast.

This tumult of pleasure having somewhat subsided, he turned towards Mrs. Raby, and, in a kind and cordial manner, enquired after her's and her children's health. Melcomb, he said, he had just seen, and that he was coming to pay his respects to Miss Roseville.

At that moment he arrived, and was received by her, as a friend she highly valued.

The conversation at first was general; people who had so long been separated, had much to say to each other. Melcomb and his sister wished to retire; but this Louisa opposed, though Lord Danesfield's countenance marked his disapprobation of their stay. However, insensibly they withdrew to the end of the room, and Lord Danesfield, who had every instant drawn his chair closer to Louisa's, found himself at liberty to whisper in her ear, the fond delight with which his whole soul was filled; then reminding her of his past sufferings, he urged her, with a lover's warmth, to name a time for compleating his long-wished, but long-delayed felicity.

While

While he was thus speaking, she wished to penetrate into the inmost recesses of his heart. She would have given all she possessed, to clear her mind of the unpleasant suspicion which still, in defiance of Mrs. Raby's expostulation, or of her own prejudice in her favour, obstinately adhered to it. Tender as she appeared, she fancied his countenance less open, less ingenuous, than it was wont to be. She thought too, that occasionally she heard a half stifled sigh escape him, tho' hemmed away with a smile. Blaming herself, however, for suffering these ideas to intrude, and affected by his tenderness, she herself sighed; and when he repeated his entreaties that she would not procrastinate, she gently hinted that her first mourning would soon be over, for she had paid Sir Charles Roseville the respect due to him, by mourning for him as a daughter. And, to avoid being more explicit till her doubts were resolved, she addressed some obliging words to Melcomb, who, with some degree of embarrassment, expressed his satisfaction at her return to her friends, and congratulated her on her late splendid acquisition. A friendly confabulation now ensued, in which Lord Danefield took little share; occupied solely in admiring his beloved Louisa, whose beauty seemed to him more attractive than ever, afraid of losing a single word that she spoke, he fondly hung over her.

Still she was not easy. Her honest nature could not endure to conceal from him what was passing in her own mind, and reproaching herself for her timidity, she determined ingenuously to confess what was corroding there. The fear of wounding his delicacy, obliged her to put some restraint upon herself. Having, therefore, asked how long

long he had been in England, and learned that he only came to town late the preceding night, she said, with a little hesitation, "Then certainly I had a transient glimpse of you."

"Of me!" said he, colouring deeply.

"Of you, my Lord," cried Louisa; too much confused herself to look at him, "and your dog was some time with me."

"You must then," said he, affecting an air of composure, which his change of countenance visibly belied, "have been at the house of a lady, to whom I carried a packet from her friends at Geneva."

"Is her name Bellenden?"

"It is."

"Have you been long acquainted with her?" asked Louisa, hesitatingly.

Lord Danesfield's cheeks now were tinged with vermillion, though just before they had been of a deadly pale.

"O no! but why these questions, my love, my angelic Louisa?"

"I will be ingenuous," cried she; "your unexpected appearance there, your attempt to escape unseen, and your dog, which the lady claimed as her own, gave rise to the most disquieting apprehensions." And her eyes were cast downwards, while a blush crimsoned her face.

"Dismiss them quickly," cried Lord Danesfield earnestly; "dismiss them, I conjure you; you alone reign unrivalled in my breast. I have already told you what carried me thither. The lady desired I would not appear, so at her request, I retired, before she introduced you into the room; little did I suspect who it was."

VOL. II.

N

Louisa,

Louisa, though somewhat re-assured by Lord Danefield's tender protestations, which he did not spare, still thought this incident involved in mystery ; but she began to flatter herself that some benevolent motive had carried him to Mrs. Bellenden's, which he did not choose to avow, and that his confusion was only occasioned by the honest resentment of injured innocence ; she was nevertheless dissatisfied with that lady's duplicity about *Mouton*.

"What could induce Mrs. Bellenden," cried she, "to assert that your dog belonged to her?"

"She does not wish," replied Lord Danefield, "that her family, with whom she is at variance, should know she sees any body ; and, I suppose, to prevent suspicion, she thought it safest to say the dog was her's. But," continued he, "let her no longer be the subject of our conversation ; I shall probably never see her again."

Louisa, tolerably satisfied with this assurance, insensibly forgot her uneasiness, and with soft complacency, conversed with Lord Danefield on subjects highly interesting to both ; nor did he depart 'till he had obtained from her, promises the most delightful to a lover's heart.

Melcomb, too generous to repine at his friend's happiness, and Mrs. Raby, who saw with infinite satisfaction that the mist of doubt seemed dispersed, took leave of her at the same time.

But when Louisa was left alone, and at liberty quietly to reflect on the mysterious incident of the morning, not all her reliance on Lord Danefield's fidelity, now that she was no longer under the magical influence of his soft words and looks, could entirely remove her doubts ; and before she retired

retired to rest, she wrote Mrs. Raby a circumstantial detail of the conversation which had passed relative to Mrs. Bellenden, entreating her to come early in the morning, and candidly give her opinion on it.

In vain she retired to compose herself to sleep, and since that was impracticable, to sooth her imagination with the sweet belief, that Lord Dane-field was as perfect a character as she had hitherto thought him; but still, the alarming change his countenance had so frequently undergone in their late interview, his reserve concerning Mrs. Bellenden, his eagerness to dismiss the subject, and the lady's odd behaviour perplexed her.

She had scarcely breakfasted when Lord Dane-field called upon her. His countenance was flushed, his spirits seemed in a flutter; he did not sit still one instant, but appeared in a sort of wild hurry, for which there was no apparent cause. Yet he was tender and passionate to excess in his manner to her. Louisa, though too certain that something discomposed him, would not distress him by enquiries, hoping to engage his confidence by an encrease of softness in her behaviour. This animated his eyes with such sparkling joy, and produced such energetic expressions of his tenderness, that again she severely chid herself for having entertained suspicions unworthy of both.

However finding that he had not yet seen Lord Melvern, she gently reproached him for his neglect, and then said, with a smile, that she must dismiss him for the present, but that she desired he would not fail to meet some of her friends, whom she had invited to spend the evening

and sup with her. After loitering some time longer, he departed, and Marianne then appeared.

"I hope, madam," said she, "you won't be angry; but somehow, I thought you were sorry not to know more of Mrs. Bellenden than I could tell you yesterday, and so I went——"

"Good God!" interrupted Louisa hastily, "what have you been doing?"

"No harm indeed, madam; but I determined I would go to this lady's house, and learn all I could." Louisa, with up-lifted hands and eyes, impatiently waited the sequel.

"So madam," continued Marianne, "I called, as if by chance, for the maid had been very civil to me, and gave her a pound of fine tea, and she was very thankful. And so we sat chatting together for half an hour. Her lady, she said, was ill, and not yet risen. And so I said, she seemed a very pretty lady. "That she is indeed," said the maid. "I wonder her husband could leave her; but I understand he is gone abroad." "What, have you never seen him?" said I. "No;" said she; "I am but just come to this place, and 'tis melancholy enough, God knows, for my mistress lives a moping life, being a very low spirited body." "And so, madam, finding there was nothing more to be got out of her, I came home."

"I hope," cried Louisa, somewhat relieved from her apprehension, that her maid's visit had drawn a suspicion of impertinent curiosity on herself, "that you said nothing about me."

"Not

"Not a syllable, madam. The maid was beginning to question me, but I was in haste, and staid not to answer."

Louisa, before she dismissed Marianne, desired her to forbear the repetition of visits to Mrs. Belenden's maid; and while she sat musing upon what she had heard, Mrs. Raby, and her little girl, whom Louisa had expressed a wish to see, arrived; the former apologizing for her delay, which had been unavoidable.

CHAPTER XLV.

LOUISA hastened to communicate to her friend, what she had just been told by Marianne. "And now," cried she, "speak honestly; what do you think of this affair?"

"I have settled it satisfactorily in my own mind," said Mrs. Raby. "Mrs. Bellenden (I will suppose) has a cross jealous husband, who perhaps has forsaken her. Her maid owns he is abroad. By some accident, Lord Danefield may have heard she is in distressed circumstances, and, with that humanity natural to him, he secretly relieved her. Or, perhaps, while he was abroad, he made an acquaintance with some of her friends, and they intrusted him to carry her letters, or money. He said he had carried her a packet; but her husband being of a disposition such as I have supposed, obliged her cautiously to conceal her receiving a visit from such a charming man as Danefield. Hence her desiring him not to appear, and her equivocation about *Mouton*."

Louisa smiled—"You have invented a very plausible tale—O, that Lord Danefield would but trust me with the truth!"

"Perhaps he is bound by some solemn promise not to relate any thing relative to Mrs. Bellenden's story," returned Mrs. Raby; "he did just hint that she was at variance with her friends, and he may be a mediator between them. However, my dear Louisa, excuse my frankness; I should be an unworthy friend, were I not to point out the rocks and shoals which you do not perceive, threatening danger to you."

This

'This is not the first time I have observed a tendency towards jealousy, in your disposition. Root it out, I beseech you ; otherwise, it will infallibly, by its baleful influence, corrode the happiness of your life. 'Tis impossible you can doubt of the truth and fidelity of such a noble, honest, and upright character as Danefield's has been invariably. Confide then securely in him, and seek not, with the curiosity of little minds, to penetrate into his secrets, persuaded, that he never can conceal any from *you*, excepting when his word has been passed to others."

Louisa, charmed with her dear Emily's honesty and good sense, tenderly embraced her, promising to profit by her advice.

Mrs. Raby's little girl, who had been amusing herself at the window, now came to them, to borrow a pair of scissors, to cut out, as she said, dancing-dolls.

" But you have no paper," said Louisa.

" Yes, but I have ; here is a crumpled piece I picked up under the table."

" O dear ! never touch letters," cried Mrs. Raby ; let me see what you are going to cut ?"

The child gave her mother a note, half open, and the latter, by a glance of her eye, seeing Louisa's name in it, handed it to her, saying she believed it was hers.

But scarcely had Louisa taken it into her hand, when she exclaimed, with an air of horror and amazement, " O my God ! what is this ?"

Mrs. Raby, terrified, without hardly knowing what she was doing, snatched the paper from her, and eagerly turning it, sought for a superscription, but finding none, she hastily read a few lines, and then, with a face crimsoned with indignation,

she started up suddenly, to commit it to the flames.

But Louisa, pale, trembling, and breathing with difficulty, had yet strength to stop her, "O stay!" cried she; "I must, I will know the whole contents, if even distraction is to be the consequence."

Both then read this fatal note.

"Come to me once more, my beloved Lord, I entreat you; do not cruelly refuse me. You cannot imagine how ill I have been ever since you left me. Surely never any thing was so unlucky as what happened yesterday! But I hope you were not seen. I think Miss Roseville could not see you. Alas! if she did, she has no cause for jealousy; she is beloved, and happy! And what am I? But, pardon me, I know this theme offends you. I only wish once more to see you; not having time yesterday to tell you the reason of my sending for you. You would not hear me, after *her* departure; yet indeed it is of consequence that I should speak with you, if you do not already guess what I have to relate.

Ah! my Lord, what fatal cause you have given me to regret that ever I became acquainted with you! Forced to quit the dear little cottage which has so often been blessed with your loved presence; forced to come to this odious town, without any hope of being noticed by a single creature; forbidden even to consider you as a friend any longer; I must, however, be beholden to your generosity, for the only comforts I can enjoy. Yet, while I am thus forlorn and miserable, you are intoxicated with joy and delight; loving, and beloved!

But I do not ungenerously repine at your felicity; I acknowledge the author of it seems to possess

possess merit ; but still I doubt her feeling for you that passionate tenderness which consumes the heart of the wretched

EMMA."

A dark cloud had for some time seemed to swim before poor Louisa's eyes ; cold drops of sweat stood on her forehead, and an oppressive weight on her breast so totally overpowered her, that she sunk lifeless on the ground. Mrs. Raby, instead of moving to assist her, stood transfixed with horror, and it was the little girl's cries, which alarmed the servants, and brought them to their Lady's relief. Their assistance, for some time, was of no avail ; but Mrs. Raby, who at length recovered from her stupefaction, desiring every body but Marianne to retire, took her unhappy friend in her arms, and gently soothing and tending her, soon found symptoms of returning sense, upon which she dismissed Marianne, not choosing any one but herself should witness the scene she expected.

Mrs. Raby's tender caresses at last produced, in Louisa, a violent gust of tears. " Now," cried she, " I am a wretch indeed ! Could you have believed this, Emily ? You, who so generously asserted his innocence, when my heart misgave me that all was not right. But ah ! what a stroke is this !"

Mrs. Raby, excessively angry herself with Lord Danesfield, and the more so, as she had firmly relied on his innocence, love not having rendered her clear-sighted and jealous, did not attempt his justification. " Think no more of this unworthy man," cried she ; " this proof of his falshood has

totally destroyed my regard for him ; he deserve^s not your regret."

"Think no more of him !" repeated Louisa, mournfully ; " ah ! how impossible is that ! say, rather think no more of happiness."

Then taking the fatal note, she read aloud, " forced to quit the dear little cottage, which has so often been blessed with your lovely presence !"—" You see," cried she, "*this* can be no transient gallantry, but a settled affair ; and he has dared to talk of me to this woman ; perhaps has boasted of my love, betrayed my letters to her ! for how else should she presume to judge of my feelings ? Yet, with strange inconsistency, while he was living with this object of his loose inclinations, it seems as if he had been tormenting her with his feigned passion for me, whom he was treacherously duping ; and while my days were heavily passing in grief and fond regret, *his* were devoted to her !"

Louisa paused ; and Mrs. Raby finding nothing to say in Lord Danefield's behalf, the former continued,

" You seemed incredulous, when I told you how he coloured, how confused he looked yesterday, when I mentioned this woman. Just now, when he was here, had I not persuaded myself it was monstrous to suspect him, I might have read his guilt in his disordered air. Now his behaviour, and Mrs. Bellenden's, is explained—yet what consummate assurance to vow love and constancy to me yesterday, when he had but just left her !

He said, indeed, he should see her no more ; there, perhaps, he spoke truth. Tired of her, he flies from her reproaches, leaves her to shame
and

and despair, and renews his vows to me. Interested motives may be his inducement. Good God ! could I once have thought this possible ; but now I can think any thing that is base of him. His engagement with me fulfilled, and his extraordinary constancy manifested to the world, he might again, if the caprice seized him, have held a secret intercourse with *his* Emma !”

The agony into which she had worked herself, afflicted Mrs. Raby exceedingly ; and she attempted to mollify her indignation, by representing that she judged too hardly of Lord Danefield, whose good qualities she insisted upon ; lamenting that he had been drawn into an intrigue by this woman, whose letter intimated, that she had met with little return to her passion. “ Suffer me,” added she, “ to see him, and hear what he has to say for himself.”

“ O no,” cried Louisa ; “ what can he say ? Why put him upon inventing lies to disguise his crime ? Is not this (holding the paper) an irrefragable proof of his guilt ? But why do I keep it a moment in my possession.”

Then taking a pen, she wrote the following billet :

TO THE LORD VISCOUNT DANEFIELD.

“ Enclosed is a paper which you dropped this morning ; a mere chance-acquainted me with its contents, otherwise I should have been ignorant that the sentiments with which I have hitherto regarded you, are not those that are due to you.

As it is no longer in your power to deceive, you will not, I presume, attempt to see me. At all events, my determination to see you no more, is irre-

irrevocable. Nothing you can say, will henceforth make any impression on her, whose esteem you have forfeited for ever.

LOUISA ROSEVILLE."

Grosvenor-street, Feb. 4, 178—

Louisa then, after enclosing Mrs. Bellenden's fatal note in hers, immediately sent this packet to Lord Danefield, telling her servant not to wait for an answer ; and at the same time she gave positive orders, that her door should be denied to every body.

Mrs. Raby, after sending her child home, and forbidding her brother to come in the evening, passed the day with her unhappy friend, wearying themselves with painful conjectures concerning this dark affair.

They both agreed, that the note did not seem written by one of that tribe that devote themselves to infamy. Louisa mentioned her modest air, her elegant manners, and the privacy in which she lived, devoid of shew or parade, which induced them to suspect she was a woman of fashion, who had eloped from her husband. Neither of them, angry as they were with Lord Danefield, could persuade themselves he had seduced her from him, tho' it was plain he had long and intimately known her, had unreservedly confided in her, and even informed her of the renewal of his addresses to Louisa.

Where he had formed this connection, seemed doubtful ; but they rather thought it must have been in England ; for it appeared as if their intercourse had of late been interrupted, and she intimated having something of consequence to communicate. *What* that might be, Louisa could

more

more easily guess than Mrs. Raby, who had not seen her.

The servant sent to Lord Danefield, not finding him at home, Louisa thought it probable he might come before he had received the fatal packet, and, to the servant's amazement, reiterated her orders, that no person whatsoever should be admitted.

Early in the evening Lord Danefield came from Lord Melvern's, where he had dined ; Louisa, pale and trembling, was ready to faint, when she heard his voice expostulating with the servant, who refused him admittance ; and Mrs. Raby scarcely could be restrained from going down to him to explain this shocking business.

Presently after a note arrived, which Louisa (too well knowing the hand writing) refused to read, entreating her friend to return it in a blank cover. This the latter did most reluctantly, for her anger, like that of all hasty people, had spent itself. But Louisa, when once irritated, was deeply so ; and now disappointed in all her darling projects, deceived in him, whom she had fancied the most perfect of mortals, equally wounded both in her love and pride, she abandoned herself to grief and mortification. Her peace and happiness she considered as gone for ever. During the misfortunes of her past life, her fortitude had invariably been supported by some ray of hope ; but the gloom with which she now fancied herself enveloped, seemed impenetrable to joy, peace, or comfort. What pleasures could riches afford to her, who had so few wants or desires, since she should not bestow them on the object for whom only she had coveted them ? For granting that Lord Danefield, with unfeigned love and
penitence,

penitence, should solicit her hand, could she consent to unite herself to a man capable of such actions, as those he had committed ? Her delicacy revolted at the idea, that honour alone had prompted the renewal of his addresses.

Mrs. Bellenden, perhaps, might still be dear to him ; and though she was inclined to surmise, that she had been rather the seducer, than the seduced, her story was so completely involved in mystery, that she knew not whether she was circumstanced so, as that Lord Danefield could make her reparation ; but at all events he was lost to her. She persuaded herself, however, that she ought to rejoice, that she was not actually married to him, when this discovery had been made ; then she must have suffered in silence, and dragged on a miserable life with a man whom she could not esteem.

Yet, with a mournful air, she exclaimed, " Well ! now all is over between us ! my visionary schemes of happiness, highly coloured by romantic fancy, have vanished ! and what is now before me but misery and despair ! "

Mrs. Raby wished to stay all night with her ; but this Louisa opposed so vehemently, that she reluctantly departed.

Dissatisfied with herself for bearing this misfortune so impatiently, Louisa humbly sought, in acts of pious devotion, to tranquillize the ferment of her soul ; nor were they wholly ineffectual ; for Mrs. Raby found her the next morning composed, though sad. She informed her, that her brother had seen Lord Danefield, who when he called in Grosvenor-street the preceding evening, had not received the packet. Thunderstruck at being refused admittance, he had, in the first agitation

tation of his mind, wrote to beseech she would see him; but now, though in a state of sorrow and despair, which baffled all power of description, he seemed determined, with a sort of desperate resignation, to submit to her sentence, and haughtily declined giving any explanation of his conduct.

Whether Louisa rejoiced that she was spared any further conflicts with herself, seemed uncertain; she only coldly observed, that Lord Dane-field was in the right not to attempt justifying his errors.

For some days, she continued to see none but Mrs. Raby; however, as she knew Bangrove had business of consequence with her, she consented to admit him. His amazement, when he saw her altered countenance, appeared in his own; he expected to have found her gay and blooming; and he could not suppose it possible, that with every advantage of person and fortune, she could be otherwise than happy.

Curious to the greatest degree to know what had produced the dejection under which she was evidently sinking, he tormented her with questions, which she was little disposed to answer. And she drily desired he would confine his conversation to the business before them, endeavouring to fix her attention so as to exclude painful reflections.

But now it was Bangrove's turn to have his patience wearied; for repeatedly he told her the same thing, before it seemed to reach her ear; and presently after, it was lost in the maze of her thoughts. Naturally quick, clear, and penetrating, she was now just the reverse; and it was with much difficulty he got through the necessary business, and made such arrangements as were requisite.

Mrs.

Mrs. Raby, unsolicited by Lord Danefield, but moved by the deep sorrow in which he seemed plunged, did all in her power to produce a reconciliation, equally necessary to the happiness of two people she loved. But Louisa warmly entreated her never to name the subject, saying, that if, when she had mentioned to him the anecdote relative to *Mouton*, he had with noble candour had such confidence in her, as honestly to confess the truth, though she should have lamented his frailty, she could have pardoned it. "But he has proved himself," continued she, "capable of deceit: that vice springs from the heart, and is a thousand times more inexcusable than infidelity."

"I differ from you," cried Mrs. Raby, "in my notion of his conduct. Had his confession only criminated himself, he has sufficient elevation of mind to have made it: but, no doubt, a principle of honour towards Mrs. Bellenden, restrained his tongue."

Louisa, secretly pleased with this opinion, did not controvert it; but as her resentment subsided, her regret at the overthrow of her happiness encreased, and she melted into silent sorrow.

Notwithstanding the strict orders she had given at her door, Lord Melvern got introduced to her, and pleaded warmly for his young friend; but though she respected his Lordship, he obtained from her no favourable concession. His arguments were much the same as those Mrs. Raby had used: the circumstances of the rupture he had learnt from Mr. Melcomb; and he added, that he was certain, all connection was entirely at an end between Lord Danefield and Mrs. Bellenden, though he acknowledged, that he had declined

elined entering into any vindication of himself, and had even refused his mediation, saying, that since he had unfortunately forfeited the good opinion of Miss Roseville, he must be miserable, and not further incur her contempt, by solicitations she would disregard, and which might be attributed to a motive his soul disdained.

Louisa remained silent, but far from displeased; the tenderness of her heart rekindled, because in these sentiments she recognized the same noble generous Danesfield, who had first won her affections; and such soft pity beamed in her charming eyes, that Lord Melvern departed, fully persuaded that his young friend need not despair in time, of a full and gracious pardon.

He advised him, for the present, to accompany his nephew, who had lately been nominated to a foreign embassy. "By this step," continued he, "you will convince Miss Roseville, that you are free from all engagements with this woman, whose history you refuse to tell me."

To this Lord Danesfield, who seemed indifferent what became of him, consented.

His departure, which Mrs. Raby announced to Louisa, made some alteration in her mode of life. She judged it right to make an effort to emerge from despondency; therefore she went to court, and appeared occasionally in the world. Her pride prompted her to disguise how deeply she had been chagrined and disappointed: but she failed in this attempt, for her smiles seemed only to play upon her lips, while sadness was depicted in her eyes.

The appearance, however, of such a beautiful young woman, elegant, and highly accomplished, perfectly independent, and possessed of so large a fortune,

fortune, was an interesting event, to all those who might pretend to her. She received innumerable offers, which she instantly rejected ; and finding herself excessively fatigued, by what others denominated pleasure and amusement, she resolved to go to Cherry-dale, where Doctor Sandolph and his niece joined her. He was but just returned from a ramble, he had been inticed by some friends to make in the west of England ; but no sooner did he hear that his Louisa was unhappy, than he flew to her. The mild piety, and chearful benign disposition of this good man, soothed and consoled her, while the lively fallies of his niece sometimes forced a smile upon her countenance. The latter, who had ever been partial to her, exerted herself to amuse her ; she was clever and entertaining, but Louisa regretted the inequality of her temper, and her propensity to satirize those, who, by their inoffensive manners, seemed entitled, by prescription, to be as ridiculous as they chose, in their different ways. Louisa knew too, that at the very time that Miss Sandolph was drawing upon herself ill-will and detestation, she was only impelled by the humour of the moment, for her heart was free from malice, and naturally benevolent.

Doctor Sandolph was exceedingly vexed at the rupture of Louisa's intended marriage ; he wondered much that Lord Danefield could have been unfaithful to her, but he candidly declined speaking upon this subject, till he was better acquainted with the circumstances attending it, and possessing more excellence of heart than refinement of sentiment, he secretly blamed both ; disapproving of her precipitation in breaking off the match, and not in the least comprehending the motives of delicacy,

delicacy, which with-held Lord Danefield from pressing for a reconciliation.

After passing a month in Kent, Doctor Sandolph and his niece returned into Shropshire. Mrs. Raby, who had been some time with her friend, was soon after obliged to go to town; and Louisa employed herself in rendering Cherry-dale, where she meant to fix her chief residence, comfortable. The house had so long been uninhabited, that it was much out of repair. She gave orders for furniture, neat and elegant, suitable to a villa. The plan of the building had been taken from an Italian model. It consisted of a suite of apartments upon the ground floor, raised upon arches, to prevent damp; underneath, were servants chambers: but the kitchen and others offices were detached from the house.

A small circular vestibule formed the entrance; on one side was an anti-room, where some of her servants always waited; next an eating-room, large and commodious, not decorated with little insignificant ornaments, but cased with a composition exactly resembling fine marble; and a flue conveyed an equal degree of warmth to every part of this room, though to give it an air of cheerfulness, it had a fire place besides, with a low plain marble chimney piece, in the French style. Next to the eating-room, was a saloon, with painted pannels, representing the different amusements of the country; the designs were good, and the subjects gay and agreeable. Louisa's own apartment, consisting of three small chambers, joined to the saloon.

On the other side of the vestibule, was a breakfast-room, and an exceeding fine library, which occupied the same space as the eating-room and saloon; and beyond that, was a gentleman's apartment,

ment, on the same scale as the lady's. The north-side of the house was distributed into apartments for company, with such convenience, that each person had their servant in a chamber adjoining to their own.

All the chambers were furnished with chintz, or calico.; no glare of magnificence astonished the eye, but the whole was fitted up in a style of simple elegance, with the greatest attention to convenience.

The house stood on a lawn, broken by shrubs; its beautiful situation has already been described. In this sweet spot, Louisa found ample employment for all the poor people in the neighbourhood, and had the comfort of reflecting, that while she was indulging her own elegant taste, in the arrangement of her house and gardens, she was furnishing bread to the industrious.

CHAPTER XLVI.

LOUISA had not been many days alone, when one morning as she was preparing her breakfast, Philip, her servant hastily entered the room with a large neat basket in his hand, which he sat down very gently on the ground.

"Here, Madam," cried he, "is something, I suppose very curious; perhaps, some fine china, for a woman who this instant brought it, charged me to carry it with care to you."

"What can it be?" cried Louisa.

"I am sure I can't guess, Madam; but I see there is a request written on the cover, not to turn the upper side downwards, nor yet to let the basket fall."

Philip, by his lady's orders, now began to unfasten the strings, and to open it carefully. First appeared a fine linen covering full of holes, and stretched so as to leave a hollow underneath. But what was Louisa's astonishment when on raising this she perceived a lovely infant fast asleep, confined by ribbands to the bottom of the basket, which, as well as the sides, were quilted with white satin. "Run quickly!" cried Louisa, "and fetch the person, who brought this to me."

Philip went out, and in the mean while, Louisa released the child from its bondage; the motion awoke it, and it began to cry, but she quieted it in her arms; and its pretty innocent countenance touching her gentle heart, she kissed it

it tenderly. Philip now came back out of breath, saying he had searched in vain for the woman ; but that she had been seen hurrying across the lawn, and the servants, though they ran after her, could not overtake her. Upon enquiring, it was discovered that a chaise, which sat her down at the lodge, had been in waiting, and took her up the instant she returned from the house.

Louisa however, was not a little curious to know whence this extraordinary present came, and upon examining the basket, she found the following letter.

To MISS ROSEVILLE.

‘ Madam,

The unhappy mother of this infant will be no more, when it is delivered to you. Her presumption in troubling you with this charge, may at first make you recoil from it, yet her motive is such as cannot displease a generous mind.

Well informed of the excellence of your disposition, she entrusts her child to you ; persuaded, that if you honour it with your protection, your precepts, and example, will guard it from the frailties of its mother. You, will perhaps, some future day discover another motive, (a very strong one) which urges her to attempt interesting you in its behalf, and which likewise made her presume to give it the name of Louisa.

Do not however, suspect her of interested views ; the infant is already amply provided for. All that she can have to desire is, that her infancy may be protected by you, and perhaps hereafter the soft pleadings of nature, which you (I trust) will generously enforce, may secure her another protector,

protector, whom at present, her wretched mother dares not name.

Ah ! deign then kindly to cherish a dying parent's innocent child ! So may you be happy in this world, and finally blessed in the other !”

Louisa's astonishment at the perusal of this letter, cannot be expressed. She easily guessed the person, who had taken this singular step, and flattered by such implicit confidence in her generosity, she determined to accept the charge, whatever trouble and inconvenience might attend it. Her bosom throbbed with various emotions, amongst which, pity for the departed mother, was predominant.

“ Sweet little infant !” cried she in a low voice, bathing its face with her tears, “ if thy unfortunate mother can know what is passing upon earth, she shall have the comfort of seeing you cherished and beloved ! I will be a mother to thee ; thy infancy shall be happy. But thou must not remind me of thy father.”

Louisa had overlooked a paper pinned to the child's frock, which contained a certificate signed by a clergyman, of the day and year in which immediately after its birth, it had been baptized by the name of Louisa : and on the back part of this was written, “ The mother died last night ; the baby has been reared by hand.”

Philip, in the mean while, had called Marianne and the housekeeper, who were already apprized of this extraordinary incident. Their wonder and exclamations at the beauty of the infant, at the fine lace and linen in which it was clothed, and at the odd manner in which it had been conveyed to their mistress, might have lasted an hour, if

Louisa

Louisa had not with a little impatience, desired them to suspend their admiration, 'till they had prepared some food fit for it to take. This was done immediately. A careful nurse was hired before the day closed, and she and her charge had a chamber contiguous to Louisa's, assigned them.

This event, and a long chain of ideas annexed to it, prevented Louisa from sleeping; her first care in the morning was to enquire after the infant. It was perpetually in her arms, generally fed by herself, and in pity to its forlorn condition, she paid it perhaps, more attention, than she would have done, had it been her own child.

The little Louisa was very healthy, and thrived fast under her care. As she was six weeks old, when she arrived at Cherry-dale, in a few days after, she began to know her kind protectress, and to smile at her approach. The latter engaged in pleasing attentions, thought less of her own vexations; and when she traced in little Louisa's infantine features, some resemblance to those of Lord Danefield, the redoubled tenderness she felt for her, clearly proved that her resentment had entirely subsided. Nor did she ever afterwards think of Mrs. Bellenden, with other sentiments, than those of pity and concern at her sad fate. Her errors she considered as expiated by her death, and having no longer any rival to encounter, Lord Danefield's lapse was extenuated in her opinion. But her high sense of honour, and the dignity due to her character, vindicated to herself her past severity.

Mrs. Raby heard with the utmost amazement of the transactions at Cherry-dale, but good and generous to her friend, she approved of her conduct.

She

She informed her that Lord William S. whom she had latterly met very often at the Duchess of L—'s, (who was in town, and in high spirits) had attached himself extremely to her; which she modestly attributed to his desire of influencing her in his friend Lord Danefield's favour, but that she had agreeably surprized him by an assurance that she had been for some time convinced that he was more to be pitied, than to be blamed.

A few days after, Mrs. Raby wrote again to Louisa. Lord William S. she said, had called upon her, and in confidence communicated to her a letter he had just received from Lord Danefield, of the most interesting nature, and which she had obtained his permission to send to Cherry-dale.

"I cannot suppose it possible," added she, "that your anger can subsist a single moment, after reading this candid confession. It is evident to me, that Lord Danefield was only guilty of a momentary error, which the poor woman, who is now no more, seduced him to commit. His heart has ever been guiltless, and is still worthy of my friend. I know he sighs and languishes for a reconciliation; so do you, though you will not avow it. Banish therefore, all unpleasant recollections, as well as absurd punctilios. Dispense and receive happiness."

Louisa, after hastily skimming over Mrs. Raby's letter, tried as well as her perturbed spirits would permit, calmly to read the voluminous packet she had received.

CHAPTER XLVII.

To the Right Hon. LORD WILLIAM S.

“**Y**OU have often, my dear Lord, accused me of reserve, but surely honour forbade me to speak, since I could not lay open the errors of my conduct, without exposing those of an unfortunate woman, who, alas! loved me but too well! An unlucky accident indeed, rendered her the object of suspicion, but could I be so base as to confirm it?

I am far from thinking myself released by her death from all solicitude for her fame, but as what I shall disclose can never more call up a blush to her cheek, I may without indelicacy relieve my oppressed heart, by unfolding its sorrows to my friend.

Peace, however, to the spirit of this poor woman! Let her not be condemned for one irregular action, for she was mild and gentle, and deserving of a better fate than that which, alas! fell to her lot. Not even my love for Louisa, can ever prevent my giving a sigh to her memory.

That I had miserably entangled myself with Mrs. Bellenden, is but too well known to you, as also the cruel consequences that ensued. I do not mean to extenuate my failings, for I have never ceased one moment to deplore them; yet when you are acquainted with the incidental circumstances, which I shall most faithfully relate, perhaps, you may not think me altogether undeserving of pity.

It

It is unnecessary I should tell you (for you kindly shared in it) the grief and mortification I felt, when Miss Roseville, from a principle of the most refined, but (I still think) cruel regard, refused me after her mother's death. You know as soon as my health was tolerably restored, I retired half broken-hearted to Danefield, after having ineffectually endeavoured to discover her retreat.

Four months the most dreary in the whole year, I passed in gloomy solitude; sullenly refusing all social intercourse, and resigning myself to melancholy and despair. Reading and walking were my sole occupations; I do not say amusements, for nothing amused me. I had lost, and alas! after recovering her, I have again lost by my own fault the only object that could equally charm my eyes, and solace my heart. It was then my custom to stroll for hours, over the extensive downs which surround my park. Neither wet nor cold, prevented these rambles. I had often noticed from some very high hills about five miles from Danefield, a small house romantically situated in the vale beneath, but I had not sufficient curiosity to take a nearer survey of it, 'till one fine clear evening in the month of March, insensibly and without design, I rambled that way. I did not see any regular road, but only a winding path along the side of the hill, which seemed rather to have been worn by the sheep, than by the foot of man. Yet the ground about the house, bore marks of elegant cultivation. Before it, was a bit of lawn neatly kept, with a small surrounding shrubbery, through which ran a narrow rapid stream, as clear as crystal, gurgling over pebbles.

The back part of the house seemed an appendage to a farm yard ; but that side which fronted the lawn, was stuccoed ; and though it had only casement windows, looked chearful, as well as comfortable.

Just as I got a few yards from this place, *Mouton*, (my faithful and constant companion) leaped over the pales, to the terror and dismay of a tame hare, which unsuspecting of danger was quietly sitting close by ; and at that instant a lady appeared on the lawn ; a mournful shriek which escaped her, and the visible consternation she was in, induced me (though I believe *Mouton* would not have hurt the little animal) to interfere, and leaping over the fence, I soon caught it, and presented it to its mistress.

The lady seemed pleased with my action, and said, she was most exceedingly obliged to me, for that she had herself reared the poor hare, and that it had accompanied her two years like a dog, following her about her house and garden, tho' not much to the advantage of the latter, having destroyed all her pinks and carnations ; " but," continued she, "'tis so pleasant to have something attached to one, that I would bear with any inconvenience, sooner than part with her."

While she was speaking, I was surveying with some astonishment her figure, not expecting to find so elegant a woman in this retired spot.— Though passed the first bloom of youth, she was still extremely pretty ; her fine auburn hair hung in curls down her back ; her complexion was pale, but delicately transparent ; and her eyes were soft and melancholy.

After a little chat on different subjects, I departed, rather wondering why she chose to live
alone

alone at such a distance from any town, and as I gathered from her discourse, having no intercourse with a creature.

The idea of my beloved Louisa, however, was too constantly present to my imagination, for me to think long of any other woman, and I soon forgot every circumstance of this adventure.

But one morning, as my servant was dressing my hair, he told me a shocking thing had happened two nights before. "The lady," said he, "has been in fits ever since."

"What lady?" cried I.

"Why, my lord, I dare say you have in your walks, seen her house a hundred times."

After much tedious circumlocution, I discovered that he meant the lady whom I have mentioned. He informed me, that the house I had seen was divided into two; one side was occupied by a farmer, and the other by Mrs. Bellenden, a widow lady. That a gang of thieves had broken into the part belonging to the former, whom they gagged and bound, after beating him, as my servant expressed himself to a mummy. Then, after taking what little money they could find, they proceeded to Mrs. Bellenden's quarters, and having plundered her pantry of her small stock of plate, they marched up stairs to her chamber, where they seized a small box, which contained her money and other valuables. Awakened by the noise, she began to shriek, which kindled their fury, and probably they would have murdered her, but her two servants (all she kept) alarmed by her cries, rushing into the room, the villains, after knocking down the footman, who opposed their passage, hastily decamped with their booty.

By this time, the screams of the women roused two of the farmer's husbandmen, who, after hard labour, naturally were so heavy with sleep, that they had not heard what had been passing. They found the farmer not quite dead, though in a deplorable condition; and added he, Mrs. Bellenden has been extremely ill ever since.

Upon enquiry, I found she had no other assistance, than what the apothecary, a poor ignorant fellow, could give; and commiserating her condition, I immediately sent my housekeeper, a very notable humane woman, to offer her services, which Mrs. Bellenden, who had only an awkward country girl about her, gladly accepted. And by what I gathered, as to the supposed state of her circumstances, judging she might stand in need of pecuniary assistance, I resolved as soon as she was better, to wait upon her myself.

Accordingly I did, and with all the attention due to her delicacy, entreated her to suffer me to be her banker. She coloured extremely, and at first declined my offer; but upon my pressing it with redoubled energy, she borrowed from me a trifle. I called too upon the farmer, who had indeed been ill-treated; but this story, like most others, had been greatly exaggerated, and the blood, which had caused so much alarm, had chiefly issued from his nose.

Mrs. Bellenden having naturally very weak nerves, her health was for some time materially hurt by the terror she had undergone. During her convalescence, my housekeeper saw her daily; her care and attentions at last restored Mrs. Bellenden's health; and she was never tired of praising her sweet temper and affability.

Pleased

Pleased to find in my neighbourhood so amiable a person, I called on her frequently. Her manners were soft and engaging; her character appeared artless and unaffected; her conversation was agreeable, and her understanding, though not much cultivated, was good.

I always found her employed in some little elegant works; for she had not those various resources which many women possess, having received but a confined education. She estimated the little services I had done her, far more than they deserved; she seemed delighted to see me, and insensibly an intimacy commenced between us, which subsisted with the greatest purity and innocence for some months; neither of us, I believe, reflecting, that as we resolutely shunned the rest of our neighbours, our conduct would be maliciously canvassed and condemned.

Finding Mrs. Bellenden worthy of my confidence, and longing to talk of my beloved Louisa, I opened to her my heart. She listened to me with soft pity, cheered me with hopes that she would not always continue inexorable; and without disgust or impatience, suffered me to dwell as long as I chose upon this darling theme.

Women have more delicacy and refinement in their sentiments than we have, and understand better than we do, how to sooth an afflicted mind. You, my dear lord, though you acknowledged Miss Roseville's merit, blamed the resignation I had made of myself to despair; and you were grown tired of listening to unavailing complaints.

Lord Melvern had still less indulgence for my passion. He represented (and I must acknowledge with reason) that it enervated my mind,

rendered me unmindful of the duties of my station, and sunk me into a state of useless inactivity. Nor would he admit œconomy, which was my ostensible reason for retirement, as a sufficient plea; for he thought, that I might live with a smaller establishment in town, than in the country. He was mortified, that I declined taking my seat in Parliament, and employing what little talents I possess, in the service of my country.

But I was now less than ever disposed to listen to his remonstrances, having, in my solitude, met with a sympathizing friend; and since I had been permitted to speak, without restraint, of my unhappiness, I found it insensibly diminish, tho' my love continued unabated. Sure of being always received with complacency, and of never meeting at Down-house any of those frivolous beings who run about annoying their neighbours with their uninteresting gossip, few days passed without my going thither.

Mrs. Bellenden communicated to me, without reserve, the circumstances of her past life. Poor woman, she had suffered a great deal, before it was her ill fate to become acquainted with me.

Her father was a younger brother of Sir Ralph Random. He had married an heiress, destined for the baronet, whose resentment against his brother for disappointing his schemes, never subsided, and even extended to his innocent niece. The lady's fortune, however, in default of male issue, was, after her husband's death, to revert to her own family; and to Mr. Random's great mortification, Emma was the sole fruit of his marriage. She lost her mother when very young; and her father being a man of a gay turn, entirely devoted to pleasure, neglected her extremely.

tremely. Indeed, he never loved her, because it was her fate not to be of the sex he had wished ; and he frequently declared, that whoever married her, must expect no portion from him, at least during his life, as his income would but just suffice for himself.

Mrs. Bellenden was kept at a country school an unusual length of time ; for Mr. Random being still handsome, and always occupied in flirting with the ladies, was in no haste to produce a fine young woman as *his* daughter. When she came home, though he made frequent excursions to London, and never missed attending every gay meeting in the country, he condemned her to a dull confined life.

She had passed four years in this manner, when a gentleman of the name of Bellenden came to take possession of a small estate near her father's, and became a frequent visitor at his house. Mr. Random however, warned him not to think of his daughter, as the estate he had just inherited, was barely sufficient to support himself, and would be a poor pittance indeed, were he to marry a girl, to whom he neither could, nor would give a farthing at present.

This prohibition availed little——youth and beauty had much more influence ; and not to tire you with the particulars of their courtship, the young people stole a match. Their marriage was discovered to Mr. Random some months after by an accident, and his rage was excessive. Neither prayers nor submission, could appease it ; and after reproaching Mr. Bellenden in the severest terms, for betraying the confidence he had reposed in him, he turned him and his daughter out of his house.

To compleat their misfortunes, an old aunt, from whom Mr. Bellenden had considerable expectations, thought fit to resent his marrying without her approbation, and in a fit of anger, disinherited him. 'Tis a trite, but true observation, that relations are as naturally disposed to bestow their favours on those on whom fortune has smiled, as to withhold them from those on whom she has frowned.

Mrs. Bellenden now found cause to repent of her hasty choice; for her husband, who had not imagined Mr. Random would have carried his resentment so far, disappointed in all his hopes of affluence, became gloomy and morose; and tho' she exerted herself to please him, her power of pleasing diminished with his affection, and they dragged on a couple of years in scanty circumstances, and with little comfort in each other.

They had frequently been invited to a friend of Mr. Bellenden's in London; and about this time being compleatly tired of the dull tedium of a country life, he consented to go with his wife to Mr. Corbyn's house.

Mrs. Bellenden now found her situation much changed for the better; for besides the scenes of pleasure and amusement in which she was incessantly engaged, she had the satisfaction of observing that her husband, finding other people admired her, paid her himself more attention than usual; and he became as good humoured and agreeable, as she had thought him in the beginning of their acquaintance. But her tranquillity was soon disturbed by Mr. Corbyn, who became violently in love with her, and took every private opportunity of hinting his passion. Mrs. Bellenden, vexed to be exposed to this man's importunity,

portunity, who was extremely disagreeable to her, earnestly pressed her husband to return home ; but as she could not assign her motive for this request, he treated it as a whim, to which he paid little regard ; for he had no suspicion of his friend's treachery, and was mightily pleased with his situation. From this state of security, he was soon roused by an incident as disagreeable as unexpected.

A slight indisposition had confined Mrs. Bellenden to her chamber, and the gentlemen had gone together to Ranelagh ; but Corbyn, stimulated by passion, secretly slipped out of the rotunda, and hastening home, boldly intruded into her apartment. Displeased and alarmed at his behaviour, she resented it warmly, insisting upon his retiring instantly ; but while they were altercationing this point, Mr. Bellenden, who had wondered much at his friend's sudden disappearance, came home, and surprized him at his wife's feet.

You may imagine a terrible scene ensued, the particulars of which I shall pass over, to come to the catastrophe. Bellenden challenged Corbyn, and they fought, when the former was killed, and the latter fled abroad.

In the mean while, the innocent cause of this calamity had been in the most deplorable condition ; and when she recovered, she not only found herself widowed and friendless, but considered by the misjudging part of the world, in the most odious light. Her father, who had taken a mistress to reside with him, refused to grant her an asylum, so did her uncle, to whom she was advised to apply ; however, the former agreed to give her a small annuity, and lend her Down-house, where she has ever since resided.

After

After a decent time had elapsed, Corbyn wrote to her, imploring forgiveness, and to prevail on her to accept of some assistance from him : but she took no notice of his letter. However he did justice to her innocence, which added to the favourable testimony of those who had marked her conduct, removed the prejudices against her.

But disgusted with the world, sad and despondent, she wished only to sink into obscurity, and with her little income, for she had two hundred a year, which Mr. Bellenden had settled on her, she lived quietly at Down house, which, as well as the garden, (being a great œconomist) she contrived to improve. Her father's death obliged her to curtail her expences into a still narrower compass ; for so far from leaving any personal fortune, he only left a multitude of debts. His heir suffered her, however, to continue at Down-house, on paying a small rent.

When I became acquainted with Mrs. Bellenden, time had somewhat mitigated her sorrows ; but the soft tint of melancholy which remained, interested me in her favour.

'Tis time, however, I should hasten to the recital of what concerns myself. I went, as you know, to London to perform my military duty, and again made fruitless researches to discover what was become of my regretted Louisa.

I was glad when I found myself at liberty to return into Dorsetshire. In my way home, as I was riding over the Downs, I passed not far from Down-house. The moon shone very bright ; and though it was late in the evening (a time I never called on Mrs. Bellenden) I would just stop to enquire after her health, for I had left her ill.—The heat was excessive ; her parlour window
which

which I passed in my way to the hall-door, was open ; and I saw her sitting, in a pensive attitude, on a sofa, enjoying a gentle breeze of air sweetly scented with jessamines and honeysuckles. She started, and coloured extremely, when I entered the room ; but I perceived she was, though surprised, pleased to see me. It was later than I had imagined. Her little supper was brought in, and she pressed me to partake of it with a cordial heartiness, not to be denied. Air and exercise had given me an appetite, which made me find her cold chicken and salad delicious ; she was more chearful than usual, and I caught from her a degree of vivacity, with which my heart had long been unacquainted ; and we had chatted sociably together above an hour after supper, when the striking of a clock reminded me that it was time to depart.

But no sooner did I mention this, than the colour forsook Mrs. Bellenden's cheeks, while a deep sigh escaped her ; and she asked me, if after such a long absence, I could not stay half an hour longer. Upon which I resumed my seat ; but this moment was awkward to us both, for though I staid, she looked unhappy ; and I felt that I was committing an impropriety, by continuing with her at so late an hour. The break my rising had made in our conversation was not to be repaired ; however, at last, she said, " I believe, Lord Danefield, I must wean myself from the delight I take in seeing you here ; 'tis a dangerous indulgence ; and when by any accident I am deprived of it, I become miserable."

I said, in return, that I was very sensible of the value of her friendship, but saw no reason why
we

we should break off an intercourse so pleasing to both.

Again she sighed, and I saw a tear steal down her cheek. Alarmed and uneasy at this sight, I went up to her, and taking her hand, eagerly enquired if any thing disturbed her; but she did not answer, and withdrew her hand, while her heart seemed oppressed with painful emotions.

I then tried to sooth her, assuring her of my unalterable esteem and regard, and conjuring her to tell me what distressed her.

"O no, my Lord," cried she, "that's impossible, and I know too well that you feel nothing for me."

"I never knew you unjust before," said I; "have not you been the kind friend who, for so many months, has gently consoled and enabled me to support my sorrows? And can you then suppose me capable of forgetting this? Indeed you wrong me; for I shall always, whatever be my fate, consider you as one of my most valuable friends."

"Ah! you think so now," said Mrs. Bellen-den; "but when you have recovered Miss Roseville, you will forget me."

I said neither of those events were likely to happen; the first I almost despaired of, and the latter, she disobliged me by supposing it possible.

"Forgive my doubts, my caprices," cried she, with a mournful air; "alas! I know not what I say. Ask me not, however, why I am unhappy, for you would despise me if you knew it."

You may imagine I tried to re-assure her, tho' I will confess, I began to dread her being more explicit. A dangerous idea, which had never before occurred to me, now darted into my mind; and

and when you consider my youth, Mrs. Bellenden's engaging figure, with her hair in beautiful disorder about her face, her attractive softness, and the tender expressions which escaped her, the hour, and the profound solitude around us—I say, when you consider all this, perhaps you will not think the frailty of a moment wholly inexcusable. But before even I left her, my conscience severely reproached me for my infidelity to the most charming woman in the world. 'Tis impossible to describe the agitation in which I passed the night; I might have exclaimed in the words of Young,

“ —————I tremble at myself,

“ And in myself am lost! at home a stranger;

“ Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd, aghast,

“ And wond'ring at her own—————.”

Alas! this is but a prologue to future misery! However, not to tire you with the unavailing regret I felt, that I could not recall the past, suffice it to say, that I resolved never again to see the fatal cause of my weakness; and since I found how little I could depend upon myself, and how easily I could be seduced to error, to fly from solitude, and mix again with the world.

But I could not think of quitting Dorsetshire, without taking some notice of Mrs. Bellenden, I therefore wrote her a few lines, to say, that the unfortunate transaction of the preceding night, the blame of which, however (out of respect to her delicacy) I took entirely upon myself, rendered it absolutely necessary we should meet no more; having fatally experienced that to be *only* the friend of a charming woman like herself, was a chimerical notion. That I respected her too much, to believe

believe that our intercourse, though confined as formerly to the strictest bounds of innocence, could now ever be renewed without distressing her. That I entreated her to forget me, because I must honestly confess, that though I had been vile enough to forget Louisa for a moment, my heart was still devoted to her for life. That, however, if at any time I could be so happy to render her any service at a distance, I should most joyfully embrace it; for that great as was my detestation at my own conduct, *her's* as a free person's, had not been such as could impair my esteem and regard; and that I should ever most sincerely wish her health and happiness.

I ordered my servant not to wait for an answer to this letter; and I made immediate preparations for going abroad with such dispatch, that the following morning I left Danefield; but just as I was driving from the door, Mrs. Bellenden's man overtook me, with the following letter, which I read in the chaise:

TO THE LORD VISCOUNT DANEFIELD.

“What do you tell me? What have you purposed? Am I then condemned to see you no more? Ah! return, if only for a moment; do not, I beseech you, fly from me. Think what complicated griefs are mine! Two days ago, and I was happy, blessed in your esteem; not sunk in my own, the object of your kind attentions; and now, by my own folly, I am become that of your contempt! In vain, my Lord, you dissemble; I know you despise me; and oh! shocking thought! I confess that you have reason. Do not say that
you

you alone are to blame ; I have nobody to reproach but myself.

I have long loved you to distraction ; and had not your heart been occupied by your passion for another, you must have perceived it. Good God ! must I then lose you for ever, and must my own fatal weakness be the cause of this affliction ! Perhaps I might have continued to disguise my feelings, had I not been thrown off my guard by your unexpected visit. How could you, however, imagine that I could see you constantly, and hear you so tenderly describe your love for your Louisa, and your sorrow at her loss, and yet retain my indifference ? The glowing passion you expressed for her, you kindled in my bosom. Forgive me, if I doubt that the object you prefer to me, loves you with the energy I do. Cold prudence might, for ages, have dictated to me unminded, for no consideration on earth could induce me to fly from you.

But whither has my despair carried me ? My doubts, my pretensions alike offend you ! You will even hate and detest my memory. Alas ! I am sufficiently wretched, without drawing this curse upon myself. You advise me to seek dissipation. Gracious Heaven ! as if sorrows, like mine, could be dissipated by frivolous amusements ! No, my Lord ; if you are inexorable to my prayers, and cruelly quit this country,—my time will be devoted to the employment of kissing the lines traced by your loved hand, fondly cherishing each little gift I have received from it. Then mournfully reviewing those places we have together visited, I shall recall to mind, with sad delight, each look, each word, and each gesture of him, who flies me for ever ! My tears flow at the recollection of
your

your noble generosity to me ; I must, however, decline the addition to my income, which you kindly propose ; because, my dear Lord, you have not enough for yourself. As for performing your cruel injunction to forget you, that is absolutely impossible ; for whilst I have breath, I shall remember and adore you.

EMMA B."

You may imagine, dear Lord William, that the perusal of this letter did not lessen my regret at what had passed. By a strange fatality I had involved in misery, an amiable woman, who had but just began to forget the unhappy incidents of her youth. I had found her tranquil, and she had greatly contributed to render me so ; and now, after destroying her peace and innocence, I left her agitated by tumultuous passions. I could not, however, help observing the striking difference between the refined sentiments of a virtuous attachment, such as I once thought Miss Roseville honoured me with, and the wild ungovernable transports of illicit love.

You were much surprised to hear of my sudden flight abroad ; and, I suspect, were half affronted that I declined assigning my motive for it. But how could I bring myself to tell you a circumstance, that I was vexed and ashamed to be conscious of myself ?

Soon after I was settled near the lake of Geneva, you gladdened my heart, by the most delightful intelligence, relative to my Louisa ; and flattering myself, that all memory of the fatal connection I had formed in Dorsetshire was fading away, not having heard of Mrs. Bellenden since
I left

I left England, I ventured to renew my addresses to Miss Roseville.

Her frank and tender acceptance of them struck me, amidst my joy, with a keen pang of remorse. You know by what unlucky accident I was detained some time abroad; but during a painful confinement, I was greatly consoled by my Louisa's letters.

In my passage from Calais, I was induced at Dessen's request, to accommodate an English Gentleman with a place in the vessel I had hired. I was told that he was extremely ill, and in haste to get home, and all the other packet-boats were engaged. To my great amazement, I recognized in this gentleman, Sir Ralph Random; he likewise recollected me, and customary civilities passed between us.

He was returning from the south of France, where he had been to restore his debilitated constitution, but without success. There was a violent swell of the sea, and the poor emaciated wretch suffered extremely; so did his servant; but I, who am never incommoded on board, was able to shew him some little attentions, of which he stood greatly in need.

After tossing about for twelve hours, during which time I thought he would have died, when we reached the shore, the sailors were forced to carry him out of the vessel in their arms. I had been thinking that this *rencontre* might conduce to a desirable purpose; for if I could move his flinty heart in favour of his niece, it would be of great advantage to her, and possibly be the means of removing her from Dorsetshire, where her vicinity to me was highly improper. Therefore, I continued my attentions to him that night at Dover;

ver; and, the next morning, when I found him a little better, I interrupted his acknowledgments, by reminding him, that he had a niece, an amiable unhappy woman, whom I ventured to recommend to his protection.

Though his countenance did not look very encouraging, I continued to plead in her behalf, and represented to him, that in his reduced condition, he ought, for his own interest, to cultivate the friendship of his niece, since the participation of his fortune could not benefit her so much, as her care and attention might benefit him. In short, I enlarged on the gentleness of her disposition, and other good qualities, and so strongly delineated the miserable state of a person in declining health, surrounded only by mercenaries, void of feeling or tenderness, that at last he commissioned me to invite her to his house in town, haughtily refusing to make any direct overture to her himself.

The moment I arrived in London, I flew to Miss Roseville's house to enquire after her, and heard she was expected the day following. At my own house I found a letter which disquieted me extremely; it was from Mrs. Bellenden, to inform me, that a circumstance, which she would acquaint me with, had determined her to take a lodging in town; that she had been about a week in Oxford-street; and, in the most earnest language, she conjured me not to refuse calling on her.

As I had intended writing to her, to acquaint her of what had lately passed between her uncle and myself, I the more readily complied with her request, wishing to persuade her to take the steps necessary to gain Sir Ralph's favour. Besides her
advantage,

advantage, which I sincerely wished to promote, I had further considered how very important it was to both our characters, that she should finally quit Dorsetshire before my marriage. Nothing could be less pleasant, than that my wife and her should meet ; as it was well known in my family, and perhaps in the neighbourhood, that I had been her constant visitor, it must appear little to her credit, if Lady Danefield had not noticed her.

Therefore, painful as I knew this visit would be to me, I prepared for it the next morning. Mrs. Bellenden gushed into tears at sight of me, and her spirits seemed in a tumult of delight. Eager, however, to settle the business on which I came, I hastened to mention it to her. But, at once, and without a moment's deliberation, she positively refused subjecting herself to an old man's caprice, content, she said, with her small fortune ; however miserable she was in other respects, she hoped, at least, to end her days free and independent.

I had not time to combat her arguments, or to hear what she had to communicate, for an accident happening to a carriage in the street, brought into Mrs. Bellenden's house, the person of all others, whom I could the least wish to see there.

You know what followed. When I distinguished Louisa's voice, amazed, alarmed, and delighted, I could scarcely refrain from going to her ; but a troublesome monitor in my own breast rendered me immovable ; however, I did come out too soon ; for I afterwards found that she had seen me. You will easily believe, that after her departure, Mrs. Bellenden vainly attempted to detain me. Yet, in my way to Grosvenor-street, I felt

felt myself so exceedingly agitated, and judging the hour rather undue for a morning visit, I postponed seeing my beloved Louisa till early in the evening, when I hoped to have recovered more composure.

With what animated delight I beheld my long-lost Louisa; yet, to my inexpressible confusion, I found doubts and perplexity in her mind, of which I too well knew the cause. However, conscious that my heart had never ceased to adore her, tho' I declined explaining the circumstances which had alarmed her, I hoped to tranquillize her by assurances of love, as sincere as they were fervent; and I had the comfort of observing that I succeeded.

The following morning, Mrs. Bellenden sent me that fatal note which occasioned my ruin; for, agitated with the perusal of it, I huddled it up carelessly in my pocket, and doubtless I dropped it at Miss Roseville's, in pulling out my handkerchief.

I need not add what followed. You blamed me for not suing for a reconciliation; but what excuses could I make for my conduct? I scorned to deny my guilt, and it was impossible to think of relating to Miss Roseville, those circumstances I have communicated to you. It seemed better to leave them involved in obscurity, and to take all the odium of this affair upon myself, rather than betray poor Mrs. Bellenden. Besides too, Miss Roseville's friends (though she herself is too generous to entertain such a thought) might have ascribed my intercessions to a very unworthy motive.

Mrs. Bellenden, however, still insisted upon seeing me; but though I now think my refusal

was

was inhuman, in the first violence of my grief, after Miss Roseville's dismissal, I could not bring myself to see the cause of it. Therefore, after acquainting her with my cruel disappointment, I conjured her, if she wished to prove that she had the least regard for my tranquillity, never to write to me more.

This produced from her a very moving letter, in which she informed me, that however disposed she might be to submit to my cruel injunction, she could not be silent, 'till she had spoke my compassion for an infant, which would soon see the light. This news quite overwhelmed me, though, if my thoughts had not been engaged in such distressing scenes, I might have suspected these unwelcome tidings, from the hints she had before given me.

Every thing that could be done to tranquillize her mind, to render her circumstances easy, and secure a future provision for her child, I did ; but all this was insufficient ; for she still languished to see me. In this point alone, I was inexorable. To maintain a connection with her, was repugnant to my principles ; our meeting could be of no real service to her ; and I had told Miss Roseville, that I should see her no more.

A few days since I received the melancholy account of her death. Alas ! what reproaches have I not to make myself ! She is the victim of our mutual frailty ! and died in consequence of her lying-in. If you can read her farewell letter unmoved, your heart must be made of different materials than I have hitherto believed it.

To

To the LORD VISCOUNT DANEFIELD.

“ You will not, I think, refuse to read this letter, when I tell you, it is the last trouble you will ever receive from me. The cold hand of death is already upon me; but it has not yet reached my heart; for that is still warm towards you. My imagination is not yet confused, for there I still behold your loved image. My past life appears, in these sad moments, like a dream, one short period excepted, and that was, while I was blessed with some portion of your regard. Then indeed I lived.

I repent most truly of all my errors, all my negligences; but I hope Heaven will be merciful to my weakness, for I have vainly endeavoured to repent of my passion for you. It is the last sentiment that will dwell in my mind; when I am insensible to that, I shall cease to be. I said I did not repent! It is false. For most heartily do I repent, having brought into the world, an unfortunate creature, who will be ashamed of her mother! That is an insupportable idea. I must pause.—

I have taken an extraordinary resolution; my poor baby shall be sent to Miss Roseville. She is noble and generous, or you would not love her. O, that she had been less amiable! She will not disdain to protect an innocent infant, solemnly recommended to her care by a dying mother; though that mother has occasioned her so much anguish. Yet she has no cause to hate me; for I never could rival her.. Ah! had you loved me but a little, how I should have regretted my untimely death! But now, what have I to regret? No eye will be filled with tears for me.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, if ever you are united to your beloved Louisa, you will then forget my errors, and the mischief that resulted from them. Perhaps then, you will sometimes bestow a sigh on the memory of her, who once knew no greater joy than to soothe and console you.

I grow very weak. With difficulty I hold my pen. Ah! do not hate my memory. Miss Roseville will not require that you should. Though incapable of frailty herself, she will compassionate my miserable fate. May she make you happy! This is my dying wish! Love my child. I have called her Louisa, the better to insure your affection.

My sight grows dim. My end is however easy. I could not have been happy, had I lived. Adieu! my beloved Lord! Adieu! for ever!

EMMA BELLENDEN."

I weep, and I am not ashamed of it. My gentle Louisa, in whom Mrs. Bellenden has placed such just, yet such singular confidence, would not disapprove of these tears. Perhaps you will say, I ought to have married this poor woman. But surely, as I never basely attempted to win her affections, or ever deceived her with the semblance of love, such a sacrifice of my own happiness was not due to honour; nor would she have accepted of it; for my hand, unaccompanied by my heart, which was not in my power to bestow, would, to her, have been a worthless gift.

If I dared—I would, now that I am released from a connection, which, alas! rendered me unworthy of my Louisa's spotless mind; I would go, and, throwing myself on her mercy, supplicate for pardon. I have now nothing to conceal. I

am not afraid of her penetrating into the inmost recesses of my soul ; she would be convinced that I am no libertine ; and surely she would no longer deduce from debauched and licentious principles, an act of casual and transient frailty, which I have never ceased to abhor and regret.

I am resolved to go to England, and learn if she deigns to notice the little creature, to whom I have unfortunately given life. If she has contented herself with shewing it that humanity which she can deny to none, I shall despair of softening her resentment. But if nobly forgetting the mother's errors, and the unhappiness they occasioned her, she fondly cherishes the child, may I not flatter myself, that the father is still dear to her ? O, could I but think that were possible ! Hope and despondency alternately sway my mind.

Pardon the length of this packet. In developing my conduct to you, I sought a relief from the sorrows which have long overwhelmed me.

Adieu ! my dear Lord ; as you will (I trust) never have such errors as mine to reproach yourself with, you will never know the misery that has been the lot of

Your faithful and obliged friend,

DANEFIELD."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LOUISA had been forced several times to lay down Lord Danefield's narrative, to give way to the emotions which throbbed at her heart. Her tears had bedewed Mrs. Bellenden's last letter, and her soul melted into pity at her sad fate.

"Alas! cried she, "had the principles of religion been properly instilled into her mind, she never would have erred; her heart seems to have been good, as well as tender, and her reliance on me is truly noble. It is greatly to be lamented, that she was not sensible how far her passions had led her astray, for then her last moments would not have been devoted to criminal love."

Louisa admired with enthusiasm the principle of honour which had actuated Lord Danefield's conduct in regard to Mrs. Bellenden. His lapse she had long pardoned, and now that she was acquainted with the circumstances attending it, she candidly allowed for the warm passions of youth, exposed to such dangerous seduction.

"Dear little infant!" cried she, straining Louisa, whom the nurse had just brought, to her bosom, "sweet innocent! thou never shalt hear from me a word reflecting on thy unhappy mother! Be mild, and gentle like her! But ah! have strength to resist thy passions! Yes;" continued she in an agony of tears, "I will fondly cherish thee, and not the less for being Mrs. Bellenden's child: for Danefield, my beloved Danefield, is thy father!"

“ Generous creature !” cried Lord Danefield, kissing the child, while he passed one arm round Louisa’s waist, “ Ah ! how can I ever repay such sweetness !”

The child was now committed to its nurse’s care, and a most interesting conversation ensued between Lord Danefield and Louisa.

He represented in the most pathetic language, what he had suffered from her displeasure, though he acknowledged it was but too just. He had never known, he said, one pleasurable sensation during the whole time he spent abroad. The silly parade and ceremonies of the Court in which he had resided, fatigued and disgusted him. But as his friend had Lord Melvern’s directions to amuse and dissipate his mind, he dragged him constantly to the public *spectacles*, where he sat in the corner of a box absorbed in melancholy—Every night he supped in company where his taciturnity rendered him completely disagreeable, especially to the ladies, who distinguished him by the appellation of the *stupid Milord*——.

“ From this dull life,” continued he, “ I was roused by intelligence——” He paused in some degree of confusion, and his eyes were bent downwards.

“ You need not distress yourself, my lord, by recurring to that ; however, be persuaded, I honour your feelings on this occasion.”

“ I need not then,” said Lord Danefield when he was a little recovered, “ add any more ; for I find you have seen a paper, not destined for your eye ; but as that contains a faithful confession of my errors, you will dispense with my dwelling on this odious subject, and I hope will generously consign it to oblivion.”

“ Most

"Most undoubtedly," cried Louisa, "Nor think that the knowledge of one failing, can overshadow in my opinion, the many amiable and excellent qualities that you displayed, even in this unfortunate affair. And believe me, Lord Danefield, your child shall find in me a faithful and tender friend."

"Angelic Louisa!" cried Lord Danefield, "If I loved you before, how much has your noble behaviour to this infant, and your generous forgiveness, endeared you to my heart! I should be a monster indeed, could I ever after this, give you cause of doubt or uneasiness. No, Louisa; I am yours, and yours alone, for life."

In such tender discourse the hours soon glided away, and Lord Danefield retired for the night, after receiving Louisa's permission to attend her at breakfast the next morning. Both had but too often been kept awake by unpleasant agitation; and now they were equally wakeful from a very different cause.

When Lord Danefield returned the next morning, the first object that struck his eye, was an elegant bust of an Apollo, done in plaister of Paris; and he had no great difficulty to discover, that the feigned god had been modelled after his own resemblance.

The amiable artist, observing his amazement, said with a blushing countenance, "you pretended last night to doubt of my having thought much of you during my abode at Heath-hall—There stands your condemnation."

Lord Danefield, enraptured, snatching her hand, covered it with kisses.

"Beloved Louisa!" cried he, "was I then so strongly delineated in your imagination, that you could

could thus exactly model my face!—Ah! may not only my exterior, but the grateful tenderness of my heart, be there indelibly impressed!”

He then informed her that Lord William S. Mrs. Raby, and Melcomb, proposed dining with her.

“ I have great obligations to them,” continued he; “ for on my arrival in town yesterday, they encouraged me to come hither.”

After breakfast, Louisa shewed Lord Danefield her house and gardens, with which he was charmed. He reflected with delight on her numerous perfections. Her taste for the fine arts promised to be a source of elegant pleasure to them both. What happiness might he not expect with a companion, good and lovely as an angel, and capable of relishing and sharing in his own favourite pursuits! He was thinking what advantage and assistance he might derive from her taste in the embellishment of his seat in Dorsetshire; when the recollection of poor Mrs. Bellenden, mingling with the idea of Danefield, interrupted his projects with a sigh of regret.

Before the arrival of his friends from London, Lord Danefield had engaged Louisa to promise, that their union should take place as soon as Doctor Sandolph (to whom a messenger was dispatched) arrived.

Lord William S. and his companions found their beloved friends as happy as love and restored confidence could make them. Cherry-dale appeared to them the Elysian fields, and Lord Danefield worthy of doing the honours of such a place.

Now that Mrs. Raby was arrived, Lord Danefield was permitted to continue there; and Doctor Sandolph, who loved so much to travel for his

his amusement, with redoubled alacrity made the journey from Shropshire to Kent. A thousand times he embraced both Louisa and Lord Danefield mingling tears with his careffes.

However, after the first effusions of his joy were over, he said, with an air of gravity, softened by complacency, "suffer me, my dear children, to remind you, that though I would have you love each other with all imaginable tenderness, I would have *your* love subordinate to *that* you owe your Maker. All gracious Providence has supported you (turning to Louisa) through various trials; but the most difficult is yet to come — *that* of not suffering yourself to be corrupted, and intoxicated by prosperity. Place, my young friends, your chief happiness on the solid basis of mutual esteem and confidence. Remember the misery that follows a single deviation from virtue. I would wish you, my lord, to reflect on it; not to mortify you by unpleasant retrospections, but only as a strong argument to induce you to avoid temptation; and you, Louisa, reflect on it, without vain glory (for none of us know how easily we may be seduced astray) but only to deter you from similar errors. Accustom yourselves therefore to curb your passions, and henceforth, let neither doubts nor jealousies allay the bliss attendant on wedded love."

Lord Danefield and Louisa, with meek deference, listened to their venerable friend, each pressing one of his hands in theirs, whilst they reciprocally interchanged looks of love, and assurances of future happiness.

Louisa had never forgotten Mrs. Stanford; she had frequently sent her very valuable presents; and hearing that she was just returned from Scotland,

land, (where her husband had been some time quartered) she invited her and Captain Stanford to Cherry-dale.

Bangrove was commissioned to draw up the marriage settlements; a most pleasing employment to him. Louisa's first object was to liquidate the debts, still remaining on the Danefield estate; and the next, to add to the provision Lord Danefield had already made on his daughter, on whom she settled six thousand pounds.

Every thing being adjusted, and Lord Melvern, who had invited himself to the wedding, being arrived, the ceremony was performed by Mr. Stephens, who came from Roseville for that purpose; good Doctor Sandolph officiating as father to the bride. Immediately afterwards, Lord and Lady Danefield went for a short time to Roseville, and their friends returned to London. Cherry-dale, however, was so highly in their favour, that they agreed to pass the remainder of the summer there.

During the interval of their absence, Lord William S. prevailed on his brother and sister to consent to his marriage with Mrs. Raby.

The Duke had formerly considered him as his heir; but the Duchess having just presented him with a son, he no longer considered Lord William's pretensions so high as before; and Mrs. Raby, amiable and well born, with a moderate fortune, appeared to him an eligible choice. Lady Caroline S. liked her extremely; she foresaw that she would make her beloved brother happy, and that was her chief solicitude. To render them perfectly independent, before their marriage took place, she settled her whole estate upon them.

Melcomb,

Melcomb, who had long been accustomed to consider his sister's children as his own, would not consent to part with the boy, whom he designed for his heir; but the little girl resided with her mother, happy in Lord William S—'s protection, who treated her with the utmost tenderness.

Lord and Lady William S. passed the chief part of the summer at Cherry-dale; but Lord Danefield pressed them so heartily to occupy his house in Dorsetshire, 'till they could determine where to fix their final residence (for they meant to purchase a house) that they consented to go to it the year following, to the great joy of the owner, who wished some time to elapse ere he saw Danefield.

Louisa, ever mindful of those from whom she had received the least kindness, gave Miss Sandolph an invitation to Cherry-dale, which was most joyfully accepted. Doctor Sandolph divided his time between Shropshire and Kent, thinking it prudent to relinquish his wandering mode of life, the infirmities of old age creeping upon him. His peregrinations, however, had never rendered him negligent of his parishioners, the duties of his function being strictly discharged during his absence, by his curate at Stretly, a man of exemplary piety.

The Duke of L. entirely reclaimed from his irregularities, passed his days in harmony with his Duchess, whose conduct was such as to prove, that good sense can subdue all defects and violence of temper. This noble pair lived in strict intimacy with Lord and Lady William S. and Lord and Lady Danefield. Melcomb found such charms in the society at Cherry-dale, that he no longer regretted his former rough companions.

Sir

Sir Ralph Random, withered to a skeleton, dragged on a wretched existence, neglected by all his acquaintance, evincing by his sufferings the fatal effects of irregularity.

Lady Bridget Wilford wondered much that her accomplished niece had not yet acquired a husband, while the person she formerly despised, she saw established in the most brilliant stile; but as she was become the admiration of all the world, Lady Bridget grew proud of acknowledging her acquaintance.

Miss Bensley continued to exhibit her feathered head, and large glassy eyes, in every public place; but the freshness of youth in her soon faded, and her temper, soured by disappointment, became a source of uneasiness to herself, and those connected with her.

Lord Pompoufton who had, by absurd ostentation, greatly reduced his fortune, vegetated at his castle in Ireland, with no other consolation in the various vexations that attended him, than that of being surrounded by dependants, of his own name; who, poor and distressed, cared little for the honour of being called Pompoufton, while they bitterly complained that, to support the dignity of that illustrious name, their chief vexed and harassed them for rents, and treated them with the most insupportable arrogance.

Mrs. Gillinsby died soon after Louisa's marriage; the embroidered hangings had wrought a change in her disposition towards her, which all the sweetness of that amiable creature, had not been able to effect.

To conclude. Lord Danefield and his beloved Louisa passed their days in the most perfect state of happiness that mortals can taste. He was the most

most fond, faithful, polite, and amiable husband in the world. Louisa made a most charming wife ; she adored her lord, and studied his delight and advantage in every action of her life. Her noble fortune restored her lord's family to its original lustre ; but her noble elevation of soul dignified it still more. The fine spring months they passed at Cherry-dale, then, late in the summer, went to Roseville where they remained 'till they settled in town for the winter.

Mr. Stanford, by Lord Danefield's interest, was promoted in the army ; and his wife and children experienced the generosity of Louisa's disposition. Lady Danefield had two sons, but no daughter, which she did not regret, as her sweet Louisa well supplied the place of one. Her delicate attentions to that child were most grateful to Lord Danefield ; indeed her whole conduct appeared to him quite angelic. Yet, amidst his felicity, he sometimes shuddered to think, that his own weakness had endangered his ever possessing it, nor could he ever forget the sad fate of Mrs. Bellen-den ; while Louisa, who could without a pang, cast a retrospective view on every action of her life, considered her present happiness as a reward for that rectitude of principle, which had induced her, on the most trying occasions, to practise the difficult virtue of SELF-DENIAL.

F I N I S.



